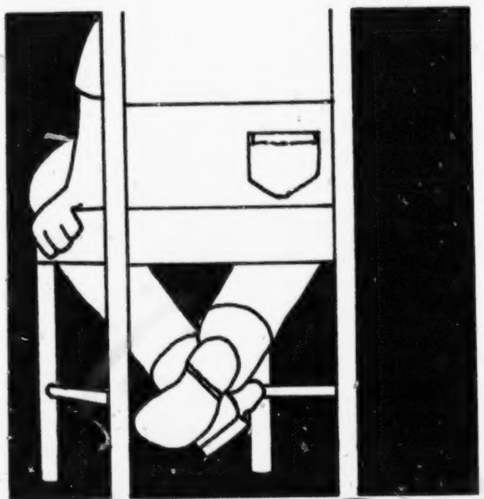
DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 035 964 EA 002 659

TITLE	DISCIPLINE IN THE CLASSROOM. FROM TODAY'S EDUCATION, NEA JOURNAL; SELECTED ARTICLES OF CONTINUING VALUE TO ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS.
INSTITUTION	NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION, WASHINGTON, D.C.
PUB DATE	69
NOTE	131P.
AVAILABLE FROM	NEA PUBLICATIONS-SALES SECTION, 1201 SIXTEENTH ST., N.W., WASHINGTON, D.C. 20036 (STOCK #381-11878, $1.50, QUANTITY DISCOUNTS)
EDRS PRICE	EDRS PRICE MF-$0.75 HC NOT AVAILABLE FROM EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS	ANTHOLOGIES, ATTENTION CONTROL, BEHAVIOR THEORIES, DELINQUENCY PREVENTION, *DISCIPLINE, *DISCIPLINE PROBLEMS, ELEMENTARY GRADES, EMOTIONALLY DISTURBED CHILDREN, GUIDELINES, *LITERATURE REVIEWS, PROBLEM CHILDREN, SECONDARY GRADES, *STUDENT BEHAVIOR, *TEACHER BEHAVIOR

ABSTRACT

INCREASING STUDENT UNREST, COUPLED WITH THE ACUTE PROBLEMS OF THE INNER CITY, INDICATE THAT THE PROBLEM OF MAINTAINING PUPIL DISCIPLINE IS GATHERING INTENSITY. THIS DOCUMENT CONTAINS 34 ARTICLES ABOUT DISCIPLINE THAT HAVE BEEN PUBLISHED IN TODAY'S EDUCATION: NEA JOURNAL SINCE 1942. ARTICLES APPLICABLE TO BOTH THE PRIMARY AND THE SECONDARY LEVELS SUGGEST THAT A BETTER CURRICULUM MAY LEAD TO BETTER DISCIPLINE. CREATIVE TEACHING, KNOWLEDGE OF A STUDENT'S LIKES AND DISLIKES, AND THE AVOIDANCE OF RIDUCULE CAN ALSO LEAD TO FEWER DISCIPLINE PROBLEMS. ARTICLES PERTAINING DIRECTLY TO THE ELEMENTARY LEVEL STRESS THE BENEFITS OF TEACHING SELF-DISCIPLINE AT AN EARLY AGE. THE DISTURBED CHILD IN THE CLASSROOM IS ALSO COVERED. THE ARTICLES DEALING WITH SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS CONSIDER DISCIPLINE PROBLEMS OF CLASSROOM GROUPS AND PROBLEMS WITH INDIVIDUALS. THIRTEEN CLASSROOM INCIDENTS ARE INCLUDED TO GIVE A DIMENSION OF ACTUAL EXPERIENCE IN HANDLING SPECIFIC PROBLEMS. (AUTHOR/LN)



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DISCIPLINE
IN THE CLASSROOM

From Today's Education: NEA Journal

*Selected articles of continuing value
to elementary and secondary school teachers*

ED035964

EA 002 659

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Library of Congress Catalog Card
Number: 73-89921

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INTRODUCTION

> *Our earth is degenerate in these latter days. Children no longer obey their parents.*—An Egyptian priest, in the fourth century B.C.

> *The children now . . . have bad manners, contempt for authority. They show disrespect for elders and love chatter in place of exercise. They no longer rise when elders enter the room. They contradict their parents, chatter before company, gobble up dainties at the table, cross their legs, and tyrannize over their teachers.*—Socrates, in the fifth century B.C.

Apparently from time immemorial teachers have thought that yesterday's children were better behaved, that today's children are harder to manage.

They thought so when NEA's Research Division last polled them on the subject. And they thought so more than a decade ago (if the responses of 3,850 Los Angeles elementary teachers to a 1956 survey are any indication).

However, with student unrest spreading downward to many high schools, and with our great troubles in the inner cities, perhaps the discipline problem *is* worse than it once was.

Since maintaining pupil discipline is one of the most persistent problems teachers face, we have brought together in this booklet some of the best of the many articles that *Today's Education: NEA Journal* has printed on the subject since 1942. Some of the articles apply to the elementary level, others to the secondary level; still others are applicable at either level. Understanding flowing in both directions should prove helpful to each group.

Because teachers often benefit from a discussion of how a specific, *live* situation was handled, we have included 12 "Classroom Incidents," with educators' reactions to them.

Certain cardinal principles appear and reappear throughout these pieces, and yet we feel the reader will find that each piece has something unique of its own to offer.

Mildred S. Fenner
Editor
Today's Education: NEA Journal

CREDITS

Titles given for the authors and consultants are as of the time of publication. The title of the journal of the National Education Association was changed to Today's Education: NEA Journal in September 1968.

Elementary and Secondary

Better Curriculum—Better Discipline: William Van Til, Chairman, Division of Curriculum and Teaching, George Peabody College for Teachers, Nashville, Tennessee. Copyright © September 1956, *NEA Journal.*

From the Other Side of the Teacher's Desk: Florence Swanson, M.D., Colorado Psychopathic Hospital, Denver, Colorado; R. L. Jenkins, M.D., Michigan Child Guidance Institute, Ann Arbor, Michigan. Copyright © October 1942, *NEA Journal.*

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Self-Discipline Is the Best Discipline: Victoria Wagner, Director, The Ethical Culture Schools of New York City. Copyright © October 1959, *NEA Journal.*

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ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY

BETTER CURRICULUM —BETTER DISCIPLINE

William Van Til

AGAIN AND AGAIN, school discipline problems grow out of a curriculum which does not make sense to the learner. A class in which academic content bears no relationship to the needs or the world of the learner is a breeding place for rebellious disturbances.

The thing that is wrong and the source of trouble, we often hear, is that the content is "too hard" or, less frequently, "too easy." But "too hard" and "too easy" assume that the curriculum content and method are fundamentally right, and only the level on which the instruction is pitched is wrong.

All too often, this assumption is fallacious. When the curriculum itself is trivial, academic, unrelated to the learner's needs, irrelevant to the social realities which surround him, the question of level is of little importance. The real villain is often the curriculum itself, not the level.

The importance of a meaningful curriculum is documented as occasional educators sponsor formal or informal research on discipline. After a continuing informal study of discipline was made by his faculty, the principal of a junior high school in Morris Plains, New Jersey, reported, "The number of discipline referrals to the office ebbs and flows according to the kind of job an individual teacher does in planning, motivating, and presenting the period's work."

Recently 38 practices associated with effective discipline were tested through observation of Baltimore teachers. Conclusions were "The practice of using all available equipment and visual aids to embellish and enrich a lesson so as to interest and promote the learning growth of pupils is closely associated with effective discipline. . . . The practice of presenting the subject matter in a vital and enthusiastic manner, of making the subject matter appealing so that . . . [it] acts as a check or control to incipient misbehavior, is closely associated with effective discipline."

Better discipline will prevail when learning experiences relate closely to the present interests and needs of children who see the use of what they are learning. Better discipline will prevail when learning is related to the social realities which surround the child.

Better discipline will prevail when we practice what we preach as to respect for personality. Better discipline will prevail as we develop active student participation, creative contributions, social travel, and all else that fosters significant experiences. Better discipline will grow out of a better curriculum in a better society.

You may know a little Jimmy who is a discipline problem despite an apparently meaningful curriculum. So do I. But in our concern for nonconforming little Jimmy, let us not neglect improving the environment of millions of Jimmy's through gearing our curriculum to the lives of the young and avoiding needless disciplinary struggles.

ELEMENTARY
AND SECONDARY

FROM THE
OTHER SIDE OF THE TEACHER'S DESK

Florence Swanson, M.D., and R. L. Jenkins, M.D.

What Children Do Not Like

[1] *"Hollering"*—A teacher who has to resort to "hollering" shows poor self-control, little self-confidence, and little command of the situation. A child feels this and usually resents it from the teacher, even though he may be used to it at home: "We didn't like her. She always hollered at us." There can be authority in a quiet voice.

[2] *Being ridiculed*—Children keenly resent being called crazy, dumb, awkward, sleeping beauty, or having the teacher make such comments as, "It's a pretty day. Why don't you play hooky?" The teacher's sarcastic manner, which makes the child lose face with his classmates, hurts and provokes bitterness and hostility.

The sarcastic remark is taken by the child as evidence of the teacher's dislike and hostility. This is made worse by the fact that the child is hurt with a weapon that he himself cannot use—he has not yet acquired the facility in the use of words necessary to fight back with ridicule. He can only respond with his own form of misconduct—refusal to work, fighting, truancy, profane and surly back talk, or rebellious comments masked by mumbling.

Ridicule should not be confused with *friendly* person-to-person kidding and teasing on which most children thrive.

[3] *Ridicule of the family*—To say, "What kind of bringing up have you had?" is to reflect against the child's mother—and children are taught to defend their mothers. Since the child may have some guilty feelings toward his parents, this subject is particularly likely to be a sensitive one. Teachers have been known to suffer physical injury from having made such comments.

[4] *Having too much expected of them*—We all rebel against being expected to perform far ahead of our mental, emotional, or physical capacities. Each child's abilities should be estimated and his program arranged accordingly. "She talked so fast I couldn't

understand." "He uses such big words I never know what he's talking about."

[5] *Grudges*—Let each day have a fresh start. "I know I done wrong, but she don't need to keep bringing it up every day. It makes me mad."

[6] *Threatening*—A child quickly loses confidence in a teacher who threatens and "gets out on a limb," or makes idle threats without intending to follow through. A child likes to know that the teacher can handle most situations without having to use "or else." The teacher maintains the child's confidence better if she is not constantly reminding him of "staying after school" or "principal's office." This does not mean that there is not a place for a deserved and definite warning given in an unprovocative manner. "When she said something you knew she meant it. No fooling with her." The effect of a warning wears off as soon as it becomes a classroom routine.

[7] *"Talking all the time"*—A child wants a clear-cut, simple explanation of what is expected of him at the start (this may have to be repeated every day for some children), but he becomes irritated and restless from seemingly endless discussions which serve as an outlet for the teacher's own tensions. Here again, the child feels that the teacher has the advantage over him and he himself has to resort to his own more primitive means of retaliation.

[8] *Criticism of other teachers*—Sometimes one teacher may criticize others in the presence of the children or even try to gain favor with her pupils by criticism of other teachers. This is likely to prove a boomerang which makes the children lose confidence in her. "She would always talk against other teachers even when we could hear. She wasn't so hot herself."

What Children Like

[1] *The teacher who is for the child*—It is more important than any other single consideration that the child feel the teacher is interested in him and his welfare, will stand up for him and the other children, and really likes them. "I know I'll get a square deal. Miss Smith is handling it for me."

[2] *Loyalty*—If the teacher is really loyal to the school (for example, does not spend her spare time relating to others all the unfortunate or difficult happenings of the school), the child will feel she has a personal loyalty to him and knows that his shortcomings are not gleefully broadcast.

[3] *Honesty*—If a child gives a confidence, it should be zealously guarded. It is easy to "double-cross" a child through the temptation to juicy gossip. Promises should not be made without full intention of carrying them out. "You can tell her. She won't let you down."

[4] *Frankness*—When there is a difficult matter to be taken up with the child, he nearly always prefers person-to-person frankness to "beating around the bush." Sincerity and understanding help to temper the cold facts. Many times it is quite a comfort to the child to know just where he stands with the teacher.

[5] *Willingness to listen*—Each child wants and deserves a chance to tell his own story to someone who has an open mind as to what occurred. This is preferably done in private conversation without the attention of the whole class. We do not generally like a public audience when we explain personal matters. "I didn't do it but I took the blame because I couldn't tell her about it in front of the whole class."

[6] *Protection of his property*—A child is pleased if the teacher will let him put his marble, coin, or trinket on her desk for temporary safekeeping. These belongings frequently have strong emotional value to the child. The teacher's regard for them is an indication to the child of her regard for him.

If any of his belongings are taken, the matter should not be passed over summarily. We cannot teach the child to respect the property of others if we do not respect his property.

[7] *Trust*—Within reasonable limits of the child's capacity, he wants to be trusted. "I liked the probationary school. They trusted me more."

[8] *The outgoing teacher*—Children like the teacher who "does things" and tells about the places he has been. This is proof of acceptance as fellow human beings, although it can be overdone. Also, some spontaneous class activity breaks the monotony of routine if a special occasion arises.

Many children like their teachers to be well-dressed, not necessarily expensively dressed, but to appear freshly groomed and not wear the same dress day after day, week after week. "I liked Miss Jones for a teacher. She always dressed so pretty." Besides being a good example to the child it may mean to him that the teacher is interested in the children as persons and wants to be pleasing to them.

[9] *The teacher who isn't "snooty"*—A child likes a teacher who will speak to him in a genuinely friendly fashion when she meets

him in the hall or on the street and, whenever there is time, will listen to his stories. Sometimes in group discussions the word *people* may well be used instead of "children," "young folks," or "pupils." It gives the idea of equality. "She treats us like we are real people." "She seems friendly. She don't go 'round with a sourpuss."

[10] *Direct evidence of being liked*—An errand cleverly suited to the particular child's need with a spontaneous word of praise often breaks down a difficult barrier and leaves the teacher and pupil friends. A spontaneous compliment falls in the same category. One should beware of the danger of appearing to have favorites. Favors should never be given as a bribe. Except in instances of obvious need, gifts of more than trivial value will usually create misunderstanding. Receiving gifts from children (except perhaps at Christmas) is generally dangerous.

[11] *The teacher who is strict*—Children want constancy, fairness, and adequate classroom control from the teacher. In general, a child who lacks confidence in his self-control feels better if he thinks he will not be permitted to get away with anything. He wants the feeling of strength, dependability, and fairness in his teacher. This is what many children woefully lack in their homes. They try out each teacher to see if she is dependable, unless her reputation is already well-established. "She is strict but she lets you tell what happened." "Gee, we don't even *want* to be bad in her class."

ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY

DISCIPLINE? FOLLOW THE YELLOW BRICK ROAD

Ruth Agnew

A TEACHER can provide pleasurable classroom experiences and thereby lessen his need to worry about discipline by assuming a Pied Piper role and tantalizing his students with stimulating ideas. Through the magic act of divining pupils' interests and releasing their various talents, a teacher can lure his students to follow him on a fascinating journey along (if we may be permitted another allegory from fiction) a "yellow brick road" like the one in the *Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, and this one leads to self-discipline.

These fictional symbols are not orthodox educational terminology, and for the teacher actually to refer to himself as a piper or mention a yellow brick road would disgust older students and confuse younger ones. Nevertheless, the teacher who infuses the spirit suggested by these symbols latches on to the imagination of the student. The philosophy behind the symbols is invested with a kind of alchemy to which humanity at large responds pleasurably. It is based on a strong human motivation—curiosity.

By small degrees the Pied Piper teacher captures his class and teases it to successive states of learning, often through a roundabout procedure or a seemingly unintentional incident.

A good teacher, aware that students thrive on success, finds ways in which they can succeed. No matter how limited his ability, every student has some contribution to make. The Pied Piper applauds any degree of success. He lets his students taste that heady wine, praise, even if only a drop of it.

One first-year teacher wrote "neat" or "very neat" on papers devoid of every virtue but appearance. Whether the pupils' knowledge was increased by such comments may be questioned, but certainly their attitude toward their work improved.

The philosophy signified by following the yellow brick road is that learning isn't difficult in small steps and that each little success makes the goals more attainable. Although enticing students to follow along the yellow brick road approaches an art, it will not be a mystery to the new teacher, with his [illegible] viewpoint and dedicated purpose.

It is not as individual travelers but as a group of friends that pupils must take to the yellow brick road. The teacher needs to present opportunities for them to become acquainted. He may do this by providing a social period of ten or fifteen minutes a week—called the "visiting period," "making classroom friends," "living a little," or whatever designation is appropriate to the age and sophistication of the group involved—during which the students discover and share mutual interests and concerns.

Naive and simple as the idea of this getting-acquainted period may seem, it can provide a positive and effective approach to successful discipline. Young people wield a tremendous influence over each other, and class approval or criticism plays a major role in constructing or destroying desired behavior.

Getting acquainted nips hostilities in the bud and prevents possible displays of aggressiveness. When his classmates are his friends and he knows they are interested in him for himself, a pupil does not feel that he has to act up to attract attention.

For the show-off's opposite, the shy child, making friends is even more important. The opportunity for a shy, inhibited girl to visit with a gifted, popular boy might encourage her to speak out more freely and to try to accomplish more.

Naturally, when students know each other better, there may be more activity and minor disturbances, but the teacher's overall task is lightened by the increased class unity. Students vie not only for self-recognition but for opportunities to serve each other and the class. Instead of competing, they all contribute to a common cause.

The congenial atmosphere places the teacher in an advantageous position. He is the leader of an enthusiastic group, a group eager to continue methods that promise enjoyment. Because students expect further satisfying experiences, they are attentive to the teacher's suggestions or instructions.

Often the piper finds the keynote for his initial tune in the field of literature. Wonderful results can come from a student's identifying himself with a character in a book.

One teacher inherited a group of ninth-grade English students who had become the despair of the school. They were notorious for their ingenious methods of class disruption and teacher disintegration. Their reading level was so low that they comprehended only the simplest subject matter.

One day this class encountered the word "decorum." A certain fascination accompanied its sound. What did the word mean? One boy ventured that it meant "holding your mother's coat for her."

This student's acknowledgment that he had some acquaintance with manners called forth a volley of other illustrations from the class, not all of them advocated by Amy Vanderbilt.

The teacher recognized the keynote. If she could build it into a tune, she might improve class attitudes and behavior. With the help of Booth Tarkington's *Penrod*, she went to work. She read the entire book aloud, for the vocabulary was not a graded one, and many of the words would have been difficult to understand without the help of voice inflection. Penrod became the class hero. When the pupils first met him, he was a sort of juvenile ne'er-do-well. Despite his admiration for a pretty and proper little girl's "decorum," Penrod thought and behaved as they did.

The class became a captive audience, teased by promises of more *Penrod* into doing stints of planned developmental silent reading. The teacher wondered if the enchantment would hold. Would these ardent admirers resent their hero as his behavior became more proper?

They did not. Instead, by the time the last page had been read and Penrod had emerged as a proud and dignified gentleman, the students had become so proper they were almost stuffy.

The changes in the class attitude had been encouraged by frequent discussions of their own exploits and of the increasing degrees of "decorum" they were attaining as the boys emulated Penrod and the girls tried to be more like the girl whose feminine virtues Penrod admired so much.

Now they laughed with indulgence at their past misdemeanors, secure in their present knowledge of proper behavior. Boys opened doors for girls. More than once, eager students competed to help the teacher carry her books to her next class.

Class alchemy had worked its magic. No dictum handed down by any teacher could have achieved such wonder. The piper's tune had called them to satisfy a longing which they secretly wished to fulfill. Penrod supplied a means which saved face for them and which subtly carried them from distorted attitudes to acceptable behavior.

Educators agree that carefully planned learning situations are safeguards against disciplinary problems, but even so, long-range plans are not inviolable. The yellow brick road allows for occasional pleasant meanderings and unexpected detours that provide relaxation on the trip to the goal. An imaginative teacher can discard an entire unit if he sees that some other material will better serve his purpose.

In certain respects, of course, the teacher must be adamant. Rules must be followed; infractions punished. But the teacher who has caught the fancy of his class can be in command of most situations, with the students his allies when isolated cases of misbehavior occur. Consider cheating, for instance. Although it is not to be tolerated, merely handing down teacher decrees never eliminates it. However, if a class has reached the point where pride of accomplishment motivates it, the members themselves often provide the controls.

If the reader is dismayed by the involvement of such an approach to discipline, I suggest that he consult Gilbert Highet's *The Art of Teaching*. In this classic best seller, the author searches out all aspects of teaching, devoting a section to the prevention and remedy of misbehavior. One should consult a master for a sound approach. I feel that he would concur with me that the teacher who views his profession as a true art is ready to pipe the magic tune that will draw his pupils after him along the yellow brick road.

ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY | EMBARRASSMENT AND RIDICULE

Lawrence E. Vredevoe

SOME TEACHERS and administrators seem to feel that a pupil will correct his ways if he is embarrassed or ridiculed before his classmates. I am certain, however, that although remarks like, "Don't keep acting like a kindergartner" or "How would you like to go down to your little sister's room?" may temporarily stop the undesirable action of a pupil, they more frequently cause new problems and do more harm than good.

Some pupils laugh at the ridicule, which disturbs the whole class, but other pupils rally to the support of their shamed classmates, feeling that the teacher has taken unfair advantage of him.

The victim himself, even though he may appear to be the tough type who can laugh the whole thing off, feels bitter toward the teacher. Some pupils who were interviewed after having been subjected to ridicule made comments like the following:

"I could have killed her."

"The teacher can say anything and make you feel cheap, but you can never answer back."

"I lost all interest in this joint after being made fun of in his class."

The teacher who employs ridicule and embarrassment alienates the whole class and humiliates individual members. Furthermore, on occasion these weapons have a boomerang action.

To the question, "Do you want me to send you to the first-grade room?" one student replied, "Anything to get out of here."

An elderly teacher who took seventh graders on her lap to embarrass them was herself acutely embarrassed when one pupil put his arms around her neck and kissed her.

Another teacher made a pupil get under her desk because he was such a disgrace to the group. Later she forgot he was under there and sat at her desk not realizing why her third graders were convulsed.

All teachers on all levels would do well to count the costs before resorting to embarrassment or ridicule in the classroom or before any group.

Teachers with the best classroom control report that they seldom if ever resort to these methods. One such teacher who was challenged by a colleague for disdaining to use sarcasm or ridicule replied, "I am an adult and I can take it, but I am not sure what harm I may do a child by embarrassing him, so I use other methods."

Classroom control is frequently difficult, and some disciplinary methods must be employed. However, embarrassment and ridicule are not only coward's tools, they are weapons which may wound deeply or be turned against the teacher.

ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY

FIRST AID FOR DISCIPLINE PROBLEMS

Rolf E. Muuss

SELF-DISCIPLINE is the long-range goal of any sensible philosophy of classroom control. However, since self-discipline is seldom fully achieved and, at best, takes many years to develop, we need to take temporary disciplinary measures from time to time.

Before deciding what disciplinary action to take in a particular instance, one should consider three factors: the situation, the pupil, and the teacher.

The Situation

When a situation arises that requires disciplinary action, a teacher needs to know who was involved, how the situation started, and what actually happened. If he has not been an actual witness, he should be aware of the hazard in relying on statements of students who were part of the incident or even of those who were witnesses.

Children's perception and memory of a situation may be quite distorted. In all probability, children are unaware of the distortions in their account of an incident and consequently they report what they "saw" with a great deal of conviction. Also, children who get involved in a fight may accuse each other, saying, "He started it," when actually Billy called Jimmy "a stinker" first, as a result of which Jimmy punched Billy in the nose first.

Who started "it" may be difficult to determine. Social conflicts of this kind can be the result of a chain reaction that starts with a minor irritation, progresses to a series of actions and reactions, and ends with physical violence.

If a sizable number of children are present in a disciplinary situation, it is necessary to attempt to differentiate between those who are actually involved and those who are innocent bystanders.

To punish indiscriminately a whole class or a whole group of children simply because they were all physically present is not only unfair but unwise, since the innocent bystanders may decide that, if they are going to be punished anyway, there is no point in trying to obey the rules.

Part of assessing a situation implies a conscious awareness on the teacher's part of the seriousness of the situation. The teacher who has the greatest number of methods of control and who can apply them judiciously, according to the seriousness of the offense, will be particularly effective.

Disciplinary methods may range from simply looking at a child who is whispering to taking a pupil who has maliciously tripped a classmate to the principal. Inexperienced teachers, at times, use their major methods of control for minor infractions of rules. They shoot little sparrows with big cannons.

The Pupil

No method of discipline is equally effective with all children. What may work well with one pupil may be highly ineffective with another. A few stern words may be all that is needed to end Sally's giggling spell. With Peter, who is less sensitive to social control, a few words do not help at all, but make the giggling even worse, necessitating a more severe method of control a few minutes later. On the other hand, the same stern words directed to oversensitive, shy Karen will not only quiet her giggling, but bring about trembling, tears, and unhappiness for the rest of the day.

The differences in pupils' responses to teachers' methods of control are as great as individual differences in terms of ability, although teachers are usually more aware of the latter.

In addition to individual differences, there are age, sex, and social class differences. We know that the younger child—in general—has more limited controls than the older child, and also, the younger child has less well-developed concepts of right and wrong and of rules and exceptions. Older children are more capable than younger children of accepting limitations and postponing immediate needs, and thus we can expect more self-discipline from them.

In terms of sex differences, we know from various studies that girls tend to be more suspicious, to show more fear, and to burst into tears more easily than boys, but girls are less inclined to be destructive and overtly hostile.

Among children from the lower socioeconomic level, the expression of aggression is often encouraged, or at least tolerated. The same thing is true of other forms of behavior that the middle class teacher might consider in need of disciplinary action: "bad" language, slovenliness in personal care and in school work, lack of inhibition in emotional expression and sex.

The effectiveness of a method of discipline depends also on the social values held by the group. If an individual is found stealing, it might be of some value to know to what extent the group approves of, feels neutral to, or disapproves of stealing. If the behavior about which the teacher is concerned is disapproved of by the group, he may concentrate his efforts on the individual and may even elicit the support of the group in modifying the behavior in question.

Social pressure tactfully applied is a most powerful force in the socialization process. If, on the other hand, the group approves of certain behavior—James' fighting, for example—the teacher might have to protect James or his opponent from physical injury by breaking up the fight. But he probably would direct his main effort to developing an attitude of cooperation and sharing in the class as a whole and would point out the negative consequences of fighting and hostility not only for James but for all of the students.

Having knowledge of the social status of class members gives a teacher additional cues to the understanding of their behavior and the effectiveness of a particular method of discipline. This is especially true if knowledge of group dynamics is combined with knowledge of social values.

While working with emotionally disturbed children, I needed to discipline Allen, a rebellious, aggressive, domineering youngster who seemed to have a great deal of influence upon the other children. A sociometric device revealed, however, that Allen was really the least liked boy in the group, even though he often made himself the spokesman of the group and his suggestions were usually accepted by the group. In this situation, it was helpful to know that Allen's apparent leadership was pseudoleadership, enforced by his biceps and deeply resented by the rest of the group.

Also, if there is a small but powerful clique in a class, it might be of considerable value for a teacher to know to what extent these individuals are a socially well-integrated part of the class or to what extent they are unrelated to the rest of the group.

The Teacher

The teacher is the third vital factor in effective control and management of pupils.

Frequently, behavior incidents are not just the "fault" of the "guilty" pupil, but a matter of interaction between the child and the teacher. Students are saucy to some teachers but not to others. Children lie to some teachers but tell the truth to others. Pupils cheat in one teacher's classroom but wouldn't think of doing it in another's.

Student behavior can be only partially understood if we do not consider it as interaction. Consequently, we teachers have to look at ourselves honestly in order to understand how we influence the behavior of those we teach.

The teacher who has accepted himself in the role of the teacher is better able to cope with the daily problems of classroom control and management. Accepting oneself in the role of the teacher involves understanding one's own idiosyncrasies and limitations and having a basically positive attitude toward oneself.

The Christian commandment "Thou shalt love thy neighbor *as* thyself" (italics mine) seems to contain a deep psychological insight in this respect, which points to the importance of self-acceptance as a prerequisite for other-acceptance. I would like to expand that idea and say also that self-understanding is equally prerequisite for other-understanding.

Self-acceptance is reflected in the teacher's attitude toward his pupils. It is difficult to maintain an effective learning climate based on negative feelings toward oneself as well as others.

Miss Smith went to a great deal of trouble to develop means and methods of classroom control. She actually showed signs of creativity in developing games, gadgets, and tricks to maintain discipline; but all of these after some initial success quickly lost their effectiveness. As an observer, I was perplexed by why her methods —which appeared so promising—remained so ineffective.

My puzzlement was resolved when I happened to overhear a conversation in which Miss Smith referred to her students as "those little monsters." While this statement may reflect both love and contempt, I am afraid in this case the latter by far outweighed the former. The difficulty which this teacher experienced in classroom control cannot be understood if one considers only the incident, the pupil, and the method of control used, but it becomes meaningful if one also considers the teacher and her attitude toward her pupils.

With Miss Miller the situation was different. Her directions to the class—even when she went through the motions of getting angry —were never very convincing and therefore basically ineffective. It appeared as if the children sensed her underlying attitude of not being completely sincere in her emotional reactions.

Finally, one day on the playground, Tommy drove her to desperation by disregarding her instructions and disrupting a game. Not shouting and not nagging, as she had done before without success, she said with real sincerity and existential involvement, "Tommy, go to your classroom." The tone of her voice left no one in doubt that she was in command of the situation. Tommy, who in similar incidents before had shown resistance, went obediently. As for the teacher, this experience became a turning point in her relationship with her students.

We have said before that a method of discipline which may work with one child may be highly ineffective with another child. This statement needs further modification which points to the complexity of the issue. A method of discipline which may work effectively for one teacher may be substantially less effective with another teacher. It appears that the effectiveness of a method of discipline depends in large part upon whether or not it is compatible with the teacher's value system.

There are other aspects of a teacher's experiences and of her personality—some of which may be subconscious—which influence her reactions to children's behavior and in turn influence their behavior. A teacher's self-understanding might be enhanced by answering the following questions:

"What kind of discipline problems can I handle calmly and almost routinely? What kind of behavior and what kind of personality repel me? Am I impulsive in my reactions to a pupil's misbehavior? Do I make promises or threats that I never seriously plan to carry out?

"Do I consider children's misbehavior as directed against me personally? Do I tend to store up resentments within myself rather than express them wisely and effectively? Are the traits in others which annoy me most the very ones which annoy me most in myself?

"Do I tend to judge people according to their race, religion, sex, social class, or school achievement, instead of as individuals?"

Honest and searching answers to these questions might give some real insight into why Teacher A gets so upset when confronted with tattling, Teacher B with defiance, and Teacher C with obscene notes. Certain patterns of socially ineffective behavior stir up in the teacher unresolved personal conflicts or emotional experiences—at times long forgotten.

What I have been discussing in this article could be described as first aid as opposed to permanent aid. As I established at the start, the skillful handling of emergency situations must be undergirded by a more basic and permanent approach. This approach involves a genuine teaching process in which the student gains much learning, including an understanding of how his behavior affects others and how the behavior of others affects him. The teacher needs to help the child develop the inner resources which will eventually enable him to be self-disciplined and to satisfy his ego needs in an effective and socially acceptable manner.

ELEMENTARY

SELF-DISCIPLINE IS THE BEST DISCIPLINE

Victoria Wagner

HIGH SCHOOL students often say, "We like a teacher who makes us work." What they mean is that they respect a teacher who sets high standards which they can take satisfaction in trying to meet.

This does not mean that they respect a teacher who "keeps them in line" by strictures and formal rules. Their respect goes to the teacher who is able to get the best from them in an atmosphere of informality and lack of pressure.

Informality and relative freedom from pressure imply not *less* discipline but *more*—a kind of discipline, however, that is not imposed primarily from without but that develops within each child as a result of the careful nurturing—throughout his whole school life—of self-respect and respect for others.

Children can learn social responsibility from their earliest years. Even three-year-olds find in the relaxed yet structured routine of their school day a reassuring basis for habits of obedience which they form almost unconsciously—obedience not just to the demands of their teacher but to the requirements of a social situation which is new to most of them.

They learn quite soon to share the responsibility for group behavior. "We do this; we *don't* do that!" becomes a general criterion, inspired first by the teacher then imperceptibly built into each child not by group *pressure* but by group *support*.

Of course, the teacher must set limits. Children are uneasy when they are expected to assume too much responsibility for their own behavior before they are old enough to predict its outcome.

Discipline in the Early Years

When Johnny's mother leaves him at school for the first time, his separation from her is a basic disciplinary experience. It is up to the teacher to help Johnny take this first giant step in starting to grow up.

At first, many children want their mothers to stay for a while; some schools even require this. But for most children, interest in using materials or equipment and in getting to know one another overcomes their dependency.

If Johnny is shy, or his mother overanxious, the teacher must take the initiative in helping them to set each other free. She might, for example, begin by saying a few minutes after Johnny arrives, "Mommy is going out to do an errand now. She will be back at juice time." By this kind of reassuring firmness, a teacher not only establishes her authority, but may influence Johnny's whole attitude toward school and learning.

Discipline Based on Children's Needs

Proper discipline is based on giving each child the same consideration we would give to an adult. By and large, children reciprocate courtesy. They want to be taken seriously and to be challenged to do their best.

Children respect fairness and honesty. A teacher who is not afraid to say, "I made a mistake; I'm sorry," is likely to get equal frankness from her pupils. She must keep promises. If she says, "I'll read that story tomorrow," the children must know that she will do it.

Almost every child is at times aggressive or destructive. A teacher must recognize this and deal with each incident honestly in a way that helps a child to face the facts and to realize that while the teacher still accepts him as a person, she disapproves of what has been done.

Within a pattern of security established by gentle, firm controls, there is room for individual deviation if it does not disrupt a class or demand too much of a teacher's time. We cannot expect the same achievement or behavior from every child, but we can encourage each to do his best.

As in life, a school situation should allow room for children to make mistakes, to experience some of the results of wrongdoing as well as to profit by good example. It is not necessary to enforce so rigid a conformity that children lack the opportunity to test and try themselves, for this is how each builds his own integrity.

Children Like Challenges

Children welcome new challenges to their increasing maturity. They take more pride in behaving well if they share in making and carrying out some of the rules.

One of the first forms of control which children have to acquire in school is the control of speech. When schools moved out of a world of silence broken—theoretically—only by recitations, a new challenge of self-discipline was introduced.

Little children chatter constantly. At school they must learn that there are times when it is all right to talk and times when they have to keep quiet. As they grow older, they need to acquire habits of greater concentration; this is difficult at a time when they are finding more and more to say to one another.

Writing Helps

One sixth-grade teacher, in order to make her pupils more aware of the need to control their sociability, asks them to write notes explaining why they talked at inappropriate times. Carefully thought out, these notes encourage self-analysis and strengthen discipline.

Sometimes a teacher may ask a pupil to write down what he said when he should have been keeping quiet. This often makes him realize how trivial a seemingly urgent communication really was.

Writing their own excuses for lateness or other misdemeanors helps children face reality and accept responsibility. Putting their explanations into acceptable written form helps children develop the self-knowledge that is an important basis for self-discipline.

What Kind of Punishment?

A teacher who loses his temper, shouts at a child, or hits him does not help his pupils to acquire control of themselves. Children watching such a scene reveal bewilderment, fear, and sometimes a kind of guilty excitement—not the emotions that should be encouraged in a classroom.

This does not mean that a teacher should avoid expressing justified disapproval, annoyance, or even anger. But he should be careful how he expresses these feelings. He should not let them distort his judgment in assigning penalties.

When punishments are mild and kept to a minimum, they are more effective than frequent punishments to which children may become inured or drastic ones that may turn offenders into classroom martyrs.

No Substitute for Hard Work

The desire to find out is still a youngster's most important incentive to learn, but he must also be responsible for planning his work and carrying it out.

Too much emphasis on technique may give a student the false impression that there is some trick or device which can be substituted for hard work. One of our students who had been having trouble with her language course reported that she had finally found a solution to her problem. When her teacher asked what this great discovery was, she replied: "Why, I go into my room and shut the door and study my French!"

To accept this simple, basic responsibility for settling down to work on his own, a student must have the capacity to discipline himself. No parental nagging, no admonitions from teachers, can be truly effective if a student has not acquired this capacity.

Social Responsibility

In the area of social life, too, students need to learn to accept an increasing amount of responsibility. Student government often plays an important role at junior and senior high levels.

But this does not mean that the faculty abrogates its authority. Advisers need to work closely with students to enforce provisions of the social code. Rules need be few, but they must be kept.

Faculty members should not rely too much on their positions to maintain their authority. They must have the personal assurance and confidence that allows them to be friendly with their students and still be respected.

Creative Discipline

To elicit dynamic control from within rather than to impose static restraints from without takes time and patience. Self-discipline in school can grow only in a climate that is basically friendly and rooted in mutual respect and confidence.

True mastery of oneself is not encouraged by too much permissiveness. A laissez-faire attitude is likely to produce a confused and disorganized person. On the other hand, a system that confines the human spirit tends to breed robots.

Because it requires more of both students and teachers, self-discipline contributes far more to their growth as individuals. In this sense, it is truly a creative force.

ELEMENTARY

OPERATING A FREE BUT DISCIPLINED CLASSROOM

Daisy Bortz as told to Anne Hoppock

DAISY BORTZ teaches a fourth grade. She has about 30 lively children representing a good cross section of the community.

Daisy's classroom is a place where children do things. They come together as a total group to plan, to think together, and to enjoy, but much of the time they work in small groups or alone.

How can Daisy be sure they are all working and learning? How can she keep all the threads in her fingers?

Out of her great wealth of experience, Daisy has developed hard-won convictions about how to operate a free but disciplined classroom.

The best kind of discipline, Daisy believes, is achieved when children are deeply absorbed in their work. In a sense, the task imposes the discipline. Children act up when they are bored; stay busy when they see sense in what they are doing. From the opening of school Daisy works to promote the idea that learning in her room is going to be exciting.

On the first day, she has many things around the room to tempt the children to explore and think. Next to the aquarium and terrarium the children find books on how to start such projects. A book on animals of the seashore is placed near a cluster of sea shells. Miniature animals and birds—a little squirrel and its babies, a tiny sea gull—invite handling. Hobby books of various kinds are grouped on a rack with books on how to do such things as science experiments without purchased equipment. Easels and a typewriter are available for use.

As children first begin to produce, Daisy is careful not to impose her standards, for she knows how easy it is to discourage the children before they really take hold. At the start, she shows interest and appreciation. Later, she will help them evaluate in order to improve.

Daisy recalls the hardest class she ever faced, a group of seventh graders who had been the despair of teachers for years. One of the toughest problems was Jim, a big boy who could read only at the second-grade level. In an effort to make school interesting, Daisy set the boys working on electricity and motors. Jim had the job of mixing paint for a big mural. He "invented" a paint-mixing machine by attaching a paddle to a small motor. Activities such as these changed Jim and his followers from troublemakers to good group members.

Daisy believes strongly in planning with children and having the plans always before the group. This planning tends to organize the day, to prevent wasted time, and to put responsibility on children to use the time well. "I tell the children," Daisy says, "not to think I'm here just to keep order and tell them what to do. We all plan what to do; each one knows what he will tackle first; each knows how much time he has to work. I don't believe that children can work intelligently and responsibly when only the teacher knows what is to be done, and why."

If clean-up chores are finished five minutes before the buses come, children and teacher check plans to see how they can use this last bit of time.

The never-a-wasted-moment idea is important in a well-disciplined classroom, Daisy believes. Trouble starts when children have to wait. In Daisy's classroom, there is no standing in line. Children don't sit down in the morning and wait for morning exercises to start. As soon as a child comes in, he begins work on an uncompleted job or starts a new one. Usually at the end of the day, the class summarizes where it is, and teacher and children put a skeleton plan on the chalkboard for the following day.

Daisy believes that one important way to assure order in a classroom is to arrange the room as a real workroom. Work centers stocked with necessary materials are placed strategically about the room. Such an arrangement prevents the children from clustering in too large groups, and the children know without instructions where to find materials and where to work. The arrangement of desks in blocks conserves space for these centers.

Daisy also has a chart with the various classroom duties numbered. Little cards, each containing a number, are kept face downward and each child chooses a card. If he feels he is not yet capable of handling the designated job, or if he has already done this chore for a period of two weeks, he chooses another card.

Daisy believes it is important to know and understand her pupils. She holds a child conference before any of her parent-teacher conferences. In preparation for this, Daisy has each child evaluate his own progress. Sometimes he writes her a confidential letter about things he thinks he does well, things which are difficult for him, personal problems he has.

He feels he can write freely because his letter will be destroyed after Daisy reads it. This letter forms a basis for Daisy's conference with him in which he helps decide what she will say to his parents and what he'll work hard on during the months ahead. The child talks over the conference with his parents, who are then ready to talk comfortably when they come for a conference with Daisy.

But Daisy doesn't limit her communication with children to planned conferences. They learn they can come to her any time they need her. Sometimes they interrupt something which seems important. "But," says Daisy, "even in the middle of a class you have to look at a child's face and see how great his need is before you tell him to wait for a better time."

Daisy knows that children frequently are unhappy, make others unhappy, and do not learn well because they believe no one respects them or cares about them. She is convinced that children must feel good about themselves in order to be good.

She cites several instances of children who might have become discipline problems if she had not helped them to achieve self-confidence and self-respect. For example, when Philip first came to Daisy's class, he had the reputation of being a bully. Daisy soon learned, however, that he was a sensitive child and his bullying behavior was only a cover-up. "As I got closer to him, he came to understand that he did not need to prove himself to me, and I helped him find legitimate ways to stand out in the group. He became one of our most helpful members."

Larry was another problem. Obviously an unhappy boy, he had been the butt of jokes because of his "out of this world" behavior. Often when the teacher or children spoke to him, he did not hear them although he was not deaf. In her first conference with Larry, Daisy said, "You know, you have one quality seldom found in boys —you can really concentrate on what you are thinking about."

"I can?" He seemed surprised at approval of any kind.

Daisy discovered that Larry was deeply interested in space exploration. She encouraged him to work on projects in this area and supplied him with materials. He began to report and demonstrate during science periods. His reading skill, which had been much below his interest level, improved rapidly as he worked on materials of interest to him and as he began to earn status in the room.

Theresa seemed to be rejected by the other children. She was dirty and ill-clad, neglected in body and spirit. Daisy began by supplying towels, soap, and comb and helped Theresa unobtrusively with her grooming. Then she brought Theresa a pretty dress (which her niece had outgrown), suggesting that she wear it the next day when the class was to go on a trip. Theresa gained self-confidence from her attractive appearance and began to take an interest in being well-groomed. She also became interested in dramatics and won praise from the others for her creativeness. By spring she was an accepted group member, learning and contributing.

"I feel pretty good," Daisy says, "if by the end of November we really understand one another." Usually, by this time, the children know what to expect of her. She knows more about them, when to be lenient with them, when to tighten up.

Daisy believes the teacher must always be in control of the situation and must therefore set limits. She wants children to have all the freedom and responsibility they can take, as fast as they can take it, but no more.

"They have to know what I, as the responsible adult, expect. They have to learn what we believe in this room and why. I involve them in making the rules we live by, but once the rules are made, they must learn to abide by them."

Sometimes Daisy gets cross and shows it, especially when the children do foolish or unkind things they have previously agreed not to do. "I'm living with them in the classroom and I want them to know I care a great deal about how we live."

When a work group gets a little noisy or disorganized, she goes to the center of the disturbance, finds what is wrong, and does a little redirecting. Frequently a child who is starting trouble responds to her arm around his shoulder or a little rub on the head.

"I often sit on the big piano bench to work, and I'll beckon a child who needs to think a little to come and sit beside me. I make note of recurring problems, try to find reasons, and work with the child privately."

Daisy doesn't send a child to the office but sometimes arranges to go with him to talk things over with the principal, who is good at working with confused or disturbed children.

Punishment? Daisy doesn't seem to use it much. "I like children," she says. Liking is the first step to understanding, and understanding is the most effective means of creating a favorable learning climate in the classroom.

ELEMENTARY

THE DISTURBED CHILD IN THE CLASSROOM

Katharine F. Tift

IF YOU are assigned a student whose daily actions foul up the learning climate in your classroom, you must, at times, have feelings of frustration, and even of fury. The purpose of this article is, first, to reassure you that you are *not* inadequate because you wish the child would disappear forever and, second, to suggest specific ways for dealing with problems which arise because he does not disappear.

One note of clarification: If the comments which follow seem overly simple, it is because emotional illness is overly complex. Little attempt will be made here to analyze the causes of emotional disorder; rather, the goal is to provide practical suggestions for dealing with those surface behaviors which disrupt your classroom.

Try to visualize a "typical" disturbed child. DC is a ten year old whose social behavior much of the time is at a three-year-old level. The minute your back is turned he runs his pencil across a neighbor's worksheet, he dips water from the fishbowl into the clay barrel, or he shoves and trips others without warning. He keeps you on edge because of his destructive actions but masters just enough subject matter and conforms just enough to your demands to keep you from telling your principal: "Either he goes or I do." (You can't ask to have him transferred; the other teachers have DC's, too!)

When you first get such a student, a useful step is to check with other staff members who have come in contact with him. Does your school counselor have a case record for him? Did *other* teachers find your DC disruptive in *their* group situations?

If their answers are No, put aside this article and, instead, ask a peer whom you trust to visit your classroom for a day. Tell him to observe *your responses* to the youngster, rather than vice versa. If your friend's findings lead you to seek guidance for *yourself*, be thankful for the experience! As you acquire insights into your own feelings, everyone—especially you—will be the winner.

Once you feel confident, however, that *you* are not largely responsible for this "enemy" action in your classroom, take the next step of acquainting yourself with the general nature of DC's disease. What *is* emotional disturbance? Where does it come from? In what different ways does it manifest itself? For meaningful answers to these questions, try the following activities:

1. See the motion picture, *David and Lisa.* (Your principal might arrange a showing for his whole staff.)

2. Visit an accredited school for emotionally disturbed children. (Observe there for a day and talk with different staff members.)

3. Read at least one book which deals with the emotionally disturbed child in the classroom. (In my opinion, one of the best texts to date is *Conflict in the Classroom: The Education of Emotionally Disturbed Children*, edited by Long, Morse, and Newman. Wadsworth, 1965.)

As you follow up these suggestions, you will become increasingly aware that the behavior which angers you is a *signal* of an illness, just as red spots are a signal of measles. You will understand that a disturbed child does not have a disease of destroying property or hurting people; these are but symptoms of his emotional disorder. And you will be reassured, once again, that *you are not responsible for his illness.*

The completion of step one (ascertaining that you'll be part of the solution, not the cause of the problem) and step two (becoming aware that emotional illness has deep environmental roots, that it is very complex, and that you alone won't "cure" it) frees you to ask the constructive "How can I help this DC and thus help all of us in the group?" instead of the defensive "Why is he doing this to me?"

For a third positive step, read about the following classroom situations, imagining yourself as the teacher in each of the three.

Situation number one: As you sit with a reading circle, you see the children stop reading and begin to stare across the room at DC, who is drawing pictures on the floor with chalk.

Your response to help DC goes something like this. You say clearly, for all to hear, "DC, I'm unhappy because my reading students are looking at your pictures instead of at their books. Tim [Tim is a dependable "normal"] will you help DC erase the chalk from the floor and then you and he may carry some books to the library for me."

Comments:

1. DC is relieved because (a) his unacceptable behavior was clearly defined, and (b) provisions were made enabling him to stop the behavior.

2. Tim experiences an ego boost. He has helped another human, and thus his concept of self-worth is enhanced.

3. Other class members feel secure: DC's behavior did not take their teacher from them.

4. You enhance *your* self-concept by dealing constructively with a challenging situation.

Question: But DC had unmet needs! Shouldn't he have been allowed to work them out on the floor with the chalk? The pictures weren't hurting anything!

Answer: Nonsense. DC's behavior was destroying the learning climate in your classroom. Furthermore, if DC had been permitted to continue unchecked, he would have experienced progressive feelings of-

Guilt ("Teacher is mad at me. I'm bad.")
Panic ("Help! I'm losing control!")
ANGER ("Why won't someone *stop* me?").

Situation number two: DC keeps interrupting a small discussion group. You feel the children's annoyance at him, and this intensifies your own impatience with his behavior.

You let the tone of your voice, as well as your words, communicate the group indignation. "DC, you're butting in and taking other people's turns. I don't like to have you take over while I'm talking! Now, I want you to get the card box so we can help you take turns. Okay?"

You know from experience that your students all enjoy this game. The card box referred to holds about 50 blank 3 x 2 cards. Each person receives the same agreed-upon number of cards, and every time a student speaks he must put one of his cards back in the box. When someone's cards are used up, he cannot talk until everyone else's cards are gone. (The students learn through trial and error how many times they are willing to permit DC to speak, and thus commit *themselves* to speaking.)

Comments:

1. DC is grateful that his unacceptable behavior was identified with honest directness. (A disturbed child cannot tolerate a honey-sweet, "Let's not do that anymore," ladled out through clenched teeth. It comes through to him as, "I'm pretending to like you, but only because I'm afraid of my real thoughts. I wish you'd drop dead.") The other students are also grateful because your acknowledgment of resentment allows them to feel comfortable with, instead of guilty about, *their* anger toward him.

2. Again you've given prompt assistance with impulse control, involving other group members. By playing a game that structures "equal rights," the pupils have a pleasurable as well as constructive role in helping their classmate.

3. You feel better and better. As you involve everyone in helping DC, it becomes "our" class instead of "my" class. A family bond begins to evolve.

Question: But DC is getting extra attention. Is that fair?

Answer: Who said life is fair? An emotionally ill person is a dependent person and requires extra attention. Don't you, as an adult, pay extra taxes to provide for patients in prisons and mental hospitals?

Situation number three: DC refuses to do a written assignment at his desk.

Withdrawal behavior presents a special challenge. Your first response might well be to hypothesize *why* he is refusing:

Too short an attention span? Call on a dependable pupil: "Jill, here is my stopwatch. Would you see how long it takes DC to complete his worksheet? DC, see if you can finish it before ten minutes are up."

He just can't do the work? "DC, I want you to do at least the first sentence now. I'll sit here and help you with it."

He simply won't do the work? "DC, I'm sorry you aren't ready to write today. Maybe tomorrow you'll be able to." (Coaxing or pleading will only reinforce the behavior you wish would go away.)

Comment: Of course there's a chance that none of these approaches will work. If he shows total resistance, keep your cool and retreat for awhile.

Question: But doesn't that mean he wins?

Answer: Wins? Who declared war? This child is *not* attacking you; he is just protecting himself from real or imagined danger.

Question: Well, after I've retreated for awhile, should I try again to get him involved?

Answer: Of course. Does a doctor make out a single prescription, and then abandon his patient if it doesn't work?

In the above three incidents, you responded differently to different problems, but your approach each time included:

1. Stating clearly to the child what his inappropriate behavior consisted of;
2. Identifying your own feelings about this behavior;
3. Providing a supportive structure for a change of behavior;
4. Using, whenever appropriate, the participation of other students in this supportive structure.

Incorporating these basic steps, you can deal with a variety of disruptive classroom situations. DC could be a girl instead of a boy, of course. (While statistically we have more disturbed boys than girls, how many giggly girls disrupt a lesson because they were brought up as "first a female" while they heard their brothers challenged to be "serious students?")

Or instead of being age 10, DC could be 4 or 14. (Although he may be emotionally ill, a high school student must have mastered a fair amount of impulse control to survive in that structure.) Also, DC's behavior could take the form of *repression* of hostile feelings rather than expression of them. (A silent resister can sometimes hold up group effort more effectively than the loud-mouthed extrovert.)

(One unholy situation which has not been discussed is what to do when a *number* of DC's are placed in your already overcrowded classroom. In my opinion, you'll have to give up. The only question is how you go about throwing in the sponge.)

In the foregoing discussion, our disturbed child was compartmentalized as though he were much different from his peers. In reality, no clear line can be drawn between "healthy" behavior and that which isn't so healthy. Each of our students moves up and down his own continuum of neurotic responses which he employs to master a particular environment at a particular time. But the disturbed child makes *compulsive responses* which occur *day after day* and which *interfere regularly* with classroom goals.

While there are constructive ways to cope with a DC, such as those suggested above, as long as a teacher is asked to contain sick psyches while he teaches subject matter, he will have cause for deep frustration. Happily, there is help on the horizon in addition to that which may be available to your school system from experts in special education. One form this help is taking is the study carrel, with CAI (computer assisted instruction). R. Louis Bright of the U. S. Office of Education predicts that within another decade "almost the entire academic portion of instruction will be on an individualized basis in most schools."

If this forecast becomes fact—and if subject matter is fed into machines to be reached for by each learner as he becomes ready to assimilate it—DC's behavior will no longer stop other pupils from gaining academic instruction.

No longer will you, the teacher, face the dilemma of "*his* needs or *theirs*?" Rather, with the help of educational technology, you will have added time for those caring relationships which every human hungers for and which bring to him a sense of self-worth. You will have more time, through small-group encounters, to help each of your students experience individual growth by making important contributions to the needs of others.

A POSITIVE APPROACH TO ELEMENTARY SCHOOL DISCIPLINE

Frances Holliday

ONE OF THE MOST challenging and often one of the most baffling problems parents and teachers have to face is that of channeling the ceaseless activities of children into an organized pattern of self-controlled behavior.

When is discipline good? Is it a question of domination by a teacher, of obedience to orders, of complete self-direction? All of these philosophies have been followed, but is any one of them enough to accomplish our purpose? How do we know when we have attained the ultimate in behavior?

Domination probably plays a part in growth: If self-control breaks down, the responsible adult must be ready to control the situation. Certainly obedience is a part: a child who cannot obey cannot learn to control himself. Also self-direction, with the aid of expert guidance, is essential to growth.

No one approach can stand alone, however, for as we analyze the goal toward which we are striving, we are convinced that the only good discipline is that which is evidenced by a growing self-control. Good teaching, well planned by the teacher and leading to cooperative teacher-pupil planning, is essential.

No "class" in self-control can accomplish the task. On the other hand, when children live together and take part in carefully chosen experiences in which they have a voice, they may be on the way to standards of behavior which are acceptable in a democratic society.

But a philosophy alone is not enough. Teachers need to incorporate this philosophy into the lives of children. Many opportunities for doing this arise in the normal activities of the classroom. Here are a few concepts and suggestions which may be helpful in making good use of these opportunities.

- Cooperative making of rules as the need arises may gain the interest of children while teacher-imposed rules may create resistance.

- Discussion of behavior problems as they appear will probably develop attitudes and a social consciousness that may guide the children in future decisions.
- A day filled with stimulating activities will allow little opportunity for idleness and mischief.
- Helping each child both to lead and to follow a leader may help him attain higher standards of group behavior.
- Having a clear understanding of the acceptable limits of behavior can give children a feeling of security and hence lead to better behavior.
- "Please do this" tends to foster cooperation. Always make a positive approach.
- Well-established routine minimizes behavior problems.
- Creative participation in classroom activities strengthens a feeling of worth and reflects itself in self-control.
- Group and individual tasks that give the child added responsibility for his own actions aid in development of independence in attaining good behavior.
- Varying activities will give a wholesome change of pace. Interest is sustained when we alternate tasks that require high concentration with those that permit greater freedom of movement.
- Every child needs a feeling of success in some activity.
- Expecting one type of behavior today and another tomorrow leads only to confusion and discouragement. Be consistent.
- Health and comfort should be furthered in the physical aspects of the environment. When a child is comfortable, it is easier for him to be well-behaved.
- Plan for a quieting five minutes at the start of the day, after recess, and after lunch periods.
- Work at being the kind of teacher that children like and trust. Strive for firmness with fairness, sincerity with tact, sympathy without sentimentality, humor without sarcasm. Remember the importance of a pleasant voice and good enunciation.
- Keep in mind that misbehavior is valuable energy directed into the wrong channels. The remedy for misbehavior lies in redirection rather than in suppression.
- Separate children who seem to have a bad effect on each other.
- Do not humiliate a child or make him the center of attention by public reprimand. A private conference is more effective and allows the child to save face.

- When a child's misbehavior disrupts the group, isolate him by having him sit apart from his classmates until he has a chance to cool off.
- Handle the normal range of misbehavior yourself, but don't hesitate to seek help for occasional problems that call for the skill of a pyschologist or other specialist.

These are only a few of the manifold opportunities that present themselves to the alert teacher.

As we analyze desirable behavior in a democratic society, we realize that the essential ingredient is consideration of the rights and feelings of others. Evaluation of growth day after day and taking a step at a time in the difficult task of attaining self-control should help children to attain that final goal—living harmoniously and purposefully together.

ELEMENTARY | IN TIME SMART

Carolyn Elizabeth Ward

ARE YOU SUFFERING from boiler-factory nerves, headache, stomach ulcers, or heartache and dismay because you see your one last virtue—your deep love for kids—trickling down the drain? At times you almost hate them, and you complain that they've driven you to it. But secretly you have to admit that something is wrong—with *you!* Your classroom discipline is not only bad, it's just about impossible.

I was deeply discouraged one gloomy January day when my supervisor, Mr. Bishop, walked into my room to observe a reading class. The lesson I had prepared was good, I knew, but I panicked when the children started acting up, deliberately sharpening pencils, getting drinks, slouching in their seats, and laughing at the wrong times.

Mr. Bishop got up to go before the class was quite ended. All he said was, "I'll be back to see you at 3:30."

At 3:30 I didn't know what to expect, but I was not prepared for the straight, bald truth. "Mrs. Ward," Mr Bishop began, "you don't have the first ingredient of a good teacher."

I seethed inwardly. How dare he say such a thing to me. I'd always loved and respected children; and, in my book, *that* had always been the first ingredient.

He went on: "The first ingredient is *good discipline.*"

There was that awful word again. *Discipline!* How I hated it. Mr. Bishop continued talking, but I didn't hear a word. Finally he said, "I'm just as stubborn as you are, and I'm going to stay here until you understand and accept the challenge of this problem. I'm going to keep talking until something gets across to you."

"All right," I said, "I'm listening."

"Now let me add to your vocabulary," Mr. Bishop suggested. "Let's talk in a different way. You're allergic to the usual vocabulary. Here is a new word we're going to use—think about it: *Aware.*"

Before long I was really listening. And I soon understood that in saying I didn't have the first ingredient of a good teacher he hadn't meant I didn't have any of the other ingredients.

"The very first thing you must do is make the children *aware* of you," he stressed. "Tomorrow morning, on the stroke of the bell, you stand up in front of your class with an interesting, well-planned lesson, and you stand there without any show of impatience or anger until every child is aware of you."

"Oh, yes!" I began defensively, "I've tried that. They'd go right on making noise until noon unless I threatened them or offered a reward of some kind."

"Now wait. I didn't say 98 or 99 percent of the group. I said *every* child. And I meant 100 percent of the class. Children can't stand inaction for very long. If one or two are causing the trouble, patiently say, 'We're waiting for Jerome or Lila Bell.' And if the offenders don't quiet down, the whole group will start putting pressure on them. I don't care if you don't teach one thing tomorrow. Forget the subject matter; it will take care of itself later. But you make them *aware* of you. Agreed? They've got to look to you for action."

The next morning I stood my ground patiently until the class came to order. We had a good arithmetic lesson, and then I gave them a special treat for spelling—a well-organized spelling baseball game as a change from the usual spelldown.

The class was enthusiastic and soon decided to have a boys' team and a girls' team. I asked the boys to sit on one side of the room, the girls on the other. We chose pitchers and designated chairs for bases. A few of the boys made remarks about having to sit in a girl's seat, but they all sat down except Joe, a small boy who liked to keep the room stirred up.

For several seconds I waited patiently, looking at Joe, but he didn't budge. Don, the class leader, a good-looking, athletic boy who kept everyone charmed with his sense of humor, was silently amused at the prospect of a stall.

"We're waiting for you to sit down, Joe," I said quietly.

"I'm not going to sit down even if you try to make me," he asserted brazenly.

"That kid's going to be president some day," Don remarked.

The class laughed.

"I'm not going to make you sit down. You're quite capable of doing it all by yourself. We'll just wait until you do," I said.

"I won't, and you can't make me."

We waited. Several of the children said, "Oh, sit down. We want to play the game."

Joe finally sagged partway into the seat, and Don said, "He's sitting down now, Mrs. Ward. Let's play the game."

Calmly, I went back to see if Don was right. Those near held their breath for a minute, hoping and fearing there might be some action.

I walked slowly back to the front of the room, displaying no anger or impatience. "No, we'll have to wait some more until Joe sits down."

Others looked disgustedly at Joe and grumbled, "You're spoiling everything, stupid. Quit acting like a baby. *Sit* down."

When group pressure was with him, Don suddenly ordered, "Sit down, Joe, or I'll get you at recess!"

Joe sat down.

Hallelujah! I thought. Imagine having Don, who often made trouble himself, on my side for a change. Why hadn't someone told me these things before? Mr. Bishop was going to get a thankful earful from me after school.

We didn't get much academic work done that day, but the children became *aware* of me and my purpose in being there. From then on I was no longer a piece of furniture, a barking dog, or a lion tamer. I'd gotten smart in time to do some good.

SECONDARY

AN OUNCE OF PREVENTION

Elizabeth Bennett—with comments (in italic) by *Martha Hunt*

LOOKING BACK on many years of teaching in a large-city problem school, I should like to offer some practical advice to those who are meeting for the first time teen-agers who are unruly, lethargic, or sullen.

In making my suggestions, I assume the following: that you are equipped by training and personality to be a teacher, that you have a thorough mastery of and enthusiasm for your subject matter, that you have a basic liking for young people and a desire to help them, that you are prepared to furnish the guidance and set up the situations which permit and encourage self-discipline.

Good.

Personal Advice

1. Your attitude is crucially important when you face teen-agers who, because of failure and maladjustment in lower grades, have come to view all teachers with suspicion. Such pupils are quick to detect anything phony in words or manner; what you offer them must be genuine.

2. Do not talk down to your pupils. They will resent it if you adopt a condescending attitude and belittle their abilities or backgrounds.

On any given subject some pupil is likely to know more than you do.

3. Be pleasant and friendly, but not chummy. Loyalty is a dominant quality in adolescents; when they have accepted you as a friend, you may be surprised to discover the extent of their loyalty.

4. Keep your sense of humor. It is easier to share a joke that amuses the class than to try to frown down hilarity, only to see it grow with attempts to suppress it.

I try to plan for a laugh daily in each class.

5. A request made with a smile is more likely to be honored than a curt order. Find ways of suggesting good behavior without issuing orders. (And if a *suggestion* should not be followed, at least

you are spared the additional problem of dealing with the defiance inherent in an *order* that is disregarded.)

Sensible approach.

6. Get plenty of sleep so that you can be alert and self-controlled during the day. Unruly pupils have no mercy for a weakling; if you are feeling below par, they will be quick to react negatively.

And remember, pupils are entitled to a bad day just as much as the teacher.

7. Neatness and good grooming, indicating pride in one's self and in one's work, call forth a favorable response from both boys and girls.

8. Set an example of good manners. Never sink to using sarcasm or ridicule.

Keep your voice low and pleasant. If you find your voice rising, stop and pitch it several tones lower. Use silence as a reprimand sometimes. (Pupils complain of teachers who are always "hollering.")

I have found a use for "Hold it!" in a stern voice on some of my touchy cases, e.g., when a fight, started earlier, was about to be revived in my room.

General Advice

1. Get acquainted with the records, the case histories, the personalities in each class—first of the leaders (ring-leaders?) and then of the other members. Make note of reasons for absence: illness at home, court summons, truancy, lack of money for carfare or lunch. Pay attention to attitudes revealed in written work or class discussions.

Learn about the previous school experience of your boys and girls. If they have been accustomed to formal routine, it is unwise to introduce informal procedures suddenly. Give the members gradually increasing responsibility for planning and conducting activities as their growing self-control merits more and more freedom.

What other teachers in the same school do may affect how pupils respond.

2. A disorderly room invites disorderly behavior. Before class, make sure that the room is in order. A rose in a vase on your desk may set the tone for polite behavior. (And if the flower disappears, replace it next day without comment.) Inspect bulletin boards frequently and unobtrusively remove any pictures that have been mutilated or defaced by scribbling.

3. Plan lessons carefully, with varied activities and alternate procedures, since your pupils' span of attention is probably short.

On the other hand, don't crowd too many activities into one period. Be flexible and responsive to the mood of the class. What "works" with one class may not work with another; what succeeds one day may fail the next.

Sad but true.

4. If you plan to use supplies which must be distributed in class, work out beforehand the system you want to use and give definite instructions for distribution. Otherwise books and papers may be "accidentally" dropped or thrown about the room. Allow time at the end of the period for any collecting that needs to be done.

5. Stand at the door at the beginning of the period. This gives you a good opportunity to show general friendliness, greet pupils who have been absent, exchange casual remarks with others.

This is an excellent suggestion.

If the students come into the classroom in an orderly way, they themselves help set a pattern for orderly behavior when class work begins. On the other hand, if jostling or pushing occurs at the doorway, bad feeling may result in name-calling or fighting.

6. Avoid standing with your back to the class for any length of time. If you do, you may invite disorderly conduct. Learn to write on the board with only your right shoulder toward the board. Student attention tends to be focused upon what you are writing if the words are not obscured by your body. Whenever possible, anything you need to put on the board should be written before class time.

7. Be particular about little things. If you are firm about scraps of paper on the floor, you may avoid having a littered room when the class leaves. If you establish standards of speech which ban slang and profanity, you are less likely to have to deal with obscenity.

Can be overdone.

8. Keep chalk and erasers in a drawer of your desk except when in use. Chalk ground into the floor, erasers hurled across the room—these are discipline problems simpler to prevent than to cope with.

9. Avoid emotion-charged topics. Discussing them may lead to an argument so explosive that fighting can result. Until a group has achieved enough maturity to keep itself under control, it is better to risk boredom than pandemonium.

When a group has worked with a teacher for a while, it should be possible to accept any controversial subject that comes up—looking for facts, and making room for differences of opinion.

10. Be definite and concise in directions. Be firm and be consistent in application of policies and rules. Vacillating between

laxness and strictness is asking for trouble, but be reasonable and be fair.

11. Avoid punishing the whole class for misbehavior, however widespread the action may seem. Mass punishment aligns the whole group against the teacher.

12. Do not publicly praise or reprimand an individual pupil. If the class attitude is not favorable, a "good" student may react rudely if singled out for unwelcome commendation. And scolding a pupil publicly not only embitters him but sometimes enlists the rest of the class on his side—against you.

Again not a universal. A word of approval is needed by some children at times—problem children especially. If the class recognizes the good work, there is no resentment. It can be overdone, of course, on teacher's pet.

13. Do not see and hear everything. Sometimes it is wiser to overlook an outburst of bad language or an attempt to provoke you.

Dealing with Specific Cases

In spite of your best efforts, situations may arise which call for remedial action. If so, speak quietly and privately to the offender. If possible, handle the whole matter yourself. Calling in a supervisor lessens your prestige with the pupils and makes the next occasion more difficult. If there is no disciplinary officer in your school, ask a nearby teacher if you can occasionally send a disturbed pupil into his classroom. Thus isolated, a troublemaker will subside into silence and "cool off."

This won't work in some schools. The teachers would not want it. It would upset the children in the new class, who would want to know all about it.

After each instance, try to discover why the situation developed. Analyze your own remarks and actions as well as the behavior of the pupils.

And finally—remember always that your troublesome pupils are troubled young people. A few may have emotional disturbances calling for special attention outside the classroom, but most of them are merely boys and girls with problems which you can help them solve.

SECONDARY

SECONDARY SCHOOL DISCIPLINE

Knute Larson—with comments (in italics) by Frances D. Bartlett and Matilda Luney

YOUTH is a mirror which reflects all the blemishes of adult society. Schools today are being asked to deal with increasing numbers of badly maladjusted youngsters, and there is little question but that discipline is far more difficult to administer in our secondary schools than ever before. That the school year passes with a minimum of difficulty reflects, in large part, the skill and dedication of teachers, counselors, and administrators. School successes receive little publicity, however, and every medium of communication highlights our failures.

Mrs. Bartlett: *A maladjusted youngster is not necessarily a disciplinary problem. My experience has been that this kind of student more often presents a problem in teaching than in discipline.*

The Importance of Understanding Adolescents

A working knowledge of adolescent psychology is essential to successful secondary school teaching. Every adolescent is subjected to a maelstrom of confusing pressures. He is growing rapidly. Conflicting values and double standards may trouble him. He is more strongly influenced by his peers than by adults, and yet his home life is of tremendous importance in shaping his attitudes.

Mrs. Bartlett: *I am not convinced that an adolescent is more strongly influenced by his peers than by the adults in his life. Superficially, in manners and dress, he may seem to conform completely to his group. But any intimate conversation with him will easily show that his values and standards are directly influenced by his family and his teachers. We are, I think, unduly afraid of challenging the family to assume some responsibility for the behavior of its children.*

Effective teachers and administrators understand all this and plan every learning experience accordingly. Most administrators are aware, however, of certain staff weaknesses in the knowledge of adolescent psychology and especially in the application of this knowledge. Principals can help remedy such deficiencies by expanding in-service education opportunities and by having appropriate books and materials readily available. Bringing in specialists grounded in practice as well as in theory is also helpful.

Miss Luney: *Principals are the key people in solving the discipline problem. If they are given real power by the board of education, their attitude, support, and help can make the difference between an atmosphere of cheerful work or one of riotous ignorance in a school.*

Mrs. Bartlett: *Books and in-service education and specialists have their place, but teachers get the most help from staff discussion of individual students. It is a great deal more useful to talk about "Charles" than to talk generalities.*

Administrators should encourage teachers to visit superior schools and superior colleagues. Visiting days with pay are quite customary, but many teachers fail to take advantage of them—particularly the ones who could profit most. The principal, therefore, should personally recommend this type of visitation and suggest schools to be visited. A brief report to a faculty meeting might well be a sequel to such a visit, time permitting.

Miss Luney: *Visiting days are of little help with discipline. An expert teacher has few, if any, problems and the job looks deceptively easy. Even bad classes are good when visitors are present.*

Teachers who seem to have trouble in getting along with certain students should be invited to confer with counselors and administrators about the problems of these students. Such conferences often lead to amazing improvements simply by providing a clearinghouse for ideas and suggestions.

Mrs. Bartlett: *Conferring individually with problem students can often clear up difficulties not solved in any other way.*

Miss Luney: *Having an experienced teacher advise and help a new one is an excellent way to turn an earnest novice into a real professional.*

Spotlight on the Lesson

The effective teacher always knows where the class is going and sees to it that it gets there. The starting point for all preventive discipline is a good lesson, carefully planned and skillfully executed. This planning involves the curriculum of the entire school system, the year's work in the specific course, the unit, and the daily lesson plan.

Mrs. Bartlett: *Here is the key to solving the problem. When lessons are carefully planned and skillfully directed, disciplinary problems practically disappear. Unfortunately, many teachers do not have time to plan, to prepare, to confer with individual students.*

Students who fail to see the relevance of what they are supposed to learn are not ready to learn, and students who are not ready to learn are a likely source of trouble. The reason they are not ready may be that material is being presented in an illogical sequence, which is confusing to them. While such a situation cannot always be quickly remedied by the individual teacher, it can certainly be improved.

Mrs. Bartlett: *I hope Dr. Larson is not suggesting that all learning in the classroom must have some immediate practical application to the student's activities.*

Miss Luney: *The children of our disadvantaged groups are difficult to motivate. I believe that holding reluctant learners in school until they are sixteen or eighteen only increases discipline troubles and encourages borderline delinquents to emulate their sullen disorder.*

This is not the place for reflections on pedagogical techniques, but I urgently recommend a sharp upgrading of the quality and quantity of classroom supervision as a means of obtaining better teaching in our secondary schools. Far too many American secondary school teachers perpetuate procedural errors simply because they have no access to helpful supervision from department heads, chairmen, supervisors, or resource teachers.

Miss Luney: *A well-taught lesson usually avoids discipline problems, but a classroom teacher needs training and authority to deal with unusual emergencies.*

If there exists a single organizational key to better schools, it lies in more and better supervisors of classroom teachers. Too many teachers become supervisors by sheer virtue of seniority; too many supervisors spend so much time on statistical reports that they have little time to supervise. Generally, supervisors are inadequately paid for their extra duties.

Supervision and in-service education are particularly important to the increasing numbers of beginning teachers we must bring into our expanding school every year. Even when these young people have a solid foundation in their subject fields and in the theoretical aspects of pedagogy, they still need attention—particularly in applying some of the tricks of the trade.

Mrs. Bartlett: *It is not just the beginning teacher who needs the supervisor's counsel. Sometimes the older teachers, being less malleable, are the source of real trouble in stirring up disciplinary problems. The supervisor should be an experienced and outstanding teacher who commands the respect of his colleagues. He should be capable of conducting the kind of in-service training which fits the needs of the particular school.*

Miss Luney: *Beginning teachers need day-to-day help by experienced teachers and administrators. Our best and most dedicated young teachers may quit from discouragement while less desirable people who do not try to teach may remain.*

Now that the beginning teacher has actually come to the firing line, he needs to be reminded of many of the things experienced teachers usually take for granted—for example, emotional control and the importance of not regarding misbehavior as a personal affront; importance of voice control, good manners, and appearance; dangers of popularity seeking; and hazards involved in use of sarcasm. The first year of teaching involves so much learning that only the most gifted beginners can absorb it all without substantial assistance.

Mrs. Bartlett: *Perhaps the most important characteristic the new teacher must acquire is selflessness. The adjustment required in making the transition from being a student to being responsible for many students is a hard one.*

The Slow Learner

The slow learner is a frequent source of discipline trouble. Although his problems may stem from a variety of causes, he is almost invariably a poor reader. He finds it difficult to comprehend abstract material and to apply any given principle to a new situation. By the time he has reached the seventh grade, he has been subjected to years of frustration, both at home and at school. Often he stops trying and makes up his mind to drop out as soon as he is 16; even the best school has great trouble in persuading him to make further efforts.

Mrs. Bartlett: *Since reading retardation is usually the main source of difficulty for the slow learner, it would seem wise to build his program around his reading. He should probably be taught by one teacher who integrates all subject matter and approaches it through reading training.*

Miss Luney: *I believe teaching machines are ideal for slow learners. The youngsters enjoy the repetition and the machines are not worn down by it.*

Many of the needs of the slow learner are similar in kind if not in degree to those of his age mates. On the other hand, he has special needs of which the teacher should be aware.

Mrs. Bartlett: *Schools should provide teachers who are specially prepared to teach slow learners. Alarmingly often, however, slow learners are handed over to the newest teachers because they are the least able to object.*

Some of the special needs of slow learners are:

1. **Individual professional evaluation.** Mass testing has a tendency to make the slow learner look worse than he really is. Teachers need to know exactly what they are dealing with.
2. **A meaningful and appropriate curriculum.** Learnings should be practical but not merely utilitarian. Material should be selected from social studies, English, mathematics, and science as well as from the nonacademic areas.
3. **Appropriate remedial instruction.** Help in reading is particularly important.
4. **Success at some academic tasks.** The slow learner needs to experience success within the framework of his limitations.
5. **Firmness and consistency.** The teacher must never surrender in the struggle to keep the slow learner working up to his capacity. Sometimes the slow learner must be driven hard, and he should never have cause to feel that the teacher has given up. For academic subjects, slow learners should be taught in small groups (under twenty) whenever possible. In nonacademic pursuits, they should be placed in regular groups.

Mrs. Bartlett: *The slow learner is not really ready for the degree of self-direction which high school requires.*

The slow learner responds favorably to appropriate audiovisual aids if he has been properly prepared for the experience and if the essential learning is hammered home after the presentation.

"Kid stuff" that outrages his sense of maturity should be avoided. Distractions in the classroom should be carefully minimized. Informality, under close control, is essential. It is most important for these youngsters to enjoy their classes. Going along with a reasonable amount of fun is far easier than trying to stamp it out.

Mrs. Bartlett: *Complete agreement here.*

The teacher should never mix discipline with academic penalties; slow learners have enough trouble with marks without adding further misery. On the contrary, one should look for ways to reward extra effort with extra credit to open up avenues of hope.

Frequent changes of pace are necessary because slow learners have a short span of interest. Routine is important, however, for it gives them a feeling of security. Their teachers can profit from the experience of industry by breaking lessons down into small, repetitive steps and by employing easy exercises for reinforcement soon after the presentation.

Mrs. Bartlett: *Perhaps I am confused by the words "change of pace." It is true that slow learners have a short attention span and that they need to be fed in small mouthfuls with time for thorough chewing. However, they do not react well to rapid shifting from one aspect of a subject to another. A whole period spent on the slow mastery of one piece of work seems to provide them with the most real satisfaction. They need an immediate feeling of accomplishment.*

Gifted Students

Surprisingly, gifted students sometimes cause disciplinary problems of the first magnitude. Such students have a low tolerance for repetition, poor quality homework assignments based on "more of the same," and a general lack of challenge in the lesson.

They need a pace that is suited to their nimble minds; they need content that calls for creative thought rather than mere parroting of facts. They are impatient with classroom repetition of facts that have already been learned by reading. Teachers must be aware of individual differences and interests and do something about them in making work assignments. Teachers should be reasonable about the amount of outside work they require of these students. The magic lies in *quality* rather than mere quantity. If every teacher feels duty-bound to load rapid learners with ever-increasing amounts of work, the net result may be rebellion.

Mrs. Bartlett: *I have seen little manifestation of disciplinary problems among gifted students when they are grouped homogeneously. My own observations indicate that if problems arise it is because the students have been allowed to feel special instead of specially lucky. They must be held to the responsibilities of their unusual endowment, never permitted the kind of freedom which is purely physical rather than intellectual. And they must be taught by the teacher who is willing to admit that some of his students are more intelligent (and better informed in some respects) than he is.*

Miss Luney: *Gifted students need adequate libraries. They devour the usual instruction in minutes and are able to go on to more advanced studies by themselves. It is good for them. All their lives they will find challenge in reading.*

Punishment

At many points in years gone by, school discipline has bordered on barbarism. This accounts, in part, for some anachronistic laws restricting methods of punishment in schools today.

Corporal punishment is currently stirring up a lot of controversy, and sentiment appears to be growing for a return to its use in school as a partial answer to the problem of delinquency.

I seriously question that corporal punishment is effective in the secondary grades, but I do not feel it should be prohibited by law on any but the local level and then only by school board action. Such laws can be used for dubious purposes by certain scheming students, and they are, in a real sense, an insult to a noble profession. Their very existence implies a lack of confidence in our teachers.

Mrs. Bartlett: *I do not believe that corporal punishment has any place in the secondary school. The adolescent child, however recalcitrant, has his peculiar brand of dignity. If this is destroyed, there can be real trouble.*

Miss Luney: *Corporal punishment may be of questionable value in the secondary grades, but its possibility is a strong deterrent. Exclusion from school should also be a possibility. More children are injured physically and mentally by fellow students in disorderly schools than were ever hurt by teachers.*

Other forms of punishment in common use in secondary schools are: the reprimand, which should be private if possible; the enforced, after-school conference between teacher and student; detention, which should be limited to minor offenses; enforced labor, which must be handled with care; fines, which should be limited to library delinquency or similar offenses; payment for destroyed public property; temporary isolation in the classroom; suspension from class; and expulsion from school, which is usually used as a last resort. Properly handled in a spirit of much light and little heat, these devices have proven effective.

Mrs. Bartlett: *Whatever form of punishment is applied, it should be consistent and supported by the administration. There are times when no one person can handle a disciplinary problem.*

I am pleased that nowhere is it suggested that extra assignments should be used as punishment.

Some Basic Principles

The importance of the individual teacher's understanding of certain principles underlying modern school discipline cannot be overstated. Let me conclude, therefore, by stating some of these principles:

- Discipline policies should be in harmony with the total goals of education. The disciplinary procedures of a school should never become ends in themselves or be confused with the procedures necessary in other types of institutions. The first criterion applied to any school disciplinary procedure should be, "Is this a sound *educational* practice?"

Miss Luney: *In the present crisis, the first criterion should be—Is it effective?*

- Disciplinary policies should be in harmony with research findings—notably in psychology and sociology.
- Disciplinary policies should be in harmony with the principles of a democratic society; that is, respect for the rights and dignity of the individual and equal justice and humanitarian treatment for all.
- Disciplinary policies should stress the *responsibilities* as well as the rights of the individual.
- Disciplinary policies should be positive and directed to the goal of self-discipline. The emphasis should be on the benefits of good self-discipline both to the group and to the individual.
- Disciplinary policies should be primarily preventive, secondarily corrective, and never retributive.

Mrs. Bartlett: *I particularly like the last three statements.*

SECONDARY | DISCIPLINE IS . . .

Sister Marian Frances Brand, SNJM

FORMULAS for maintaining classroom discipline are many and varied, and what works for one teacher fails for another. Chances are, nonetheless, that any formula that proves effective contains the following ingredients:

Discipline is preparation—long-range and short-range. Long-range preparation is the necessary, daily routine of planning, preparing material, and correcting papers.

Short-range preparation is the activity just before a class begins that results in students' entering an orderly room. The teacher has all the necessary materials ready for distribution. He has written key words on the board to guide students in following his instructions and to make oral spelling unnecessary. He adjusts windows, arranges his books, checks his seat plan, and prepares his attendance slip. The classroom is ready, and the teacher is in control. Class begins promptly without that little lull in which attention is often lost before it is even captured.

Discipline is dignity. In the classroom, the teacher lives his dignity by avoiding casual sitting positions, casual vocabulary, casual joking, familiar give-and-take—except when they are deliberately used as tools of emphasis.

Dignity expects the courtesy of a greeting when pupils come into the classroom. The teacher will not receive acknowledgement from every student, but his attitude will encourage many greetings.

Since the teacher expects the class to consider education a serious business, he approaches his class in a businesslike, professional way. He is courteous, considerate, pleasant, understanding, consistent, and, in the sum, dignified.

Discipline is moving deliberately and purposefully with the apparent self-confidence of a captain on top-deck. The disciplined teacher shows that he knows exactly what he wants to do. By acting serene, he creates an atmosphere of serenity. Students assume the matter-of-fact, reasonable, practical tones and attitudes of their teachers. Generally, a student is as tense or relaxed as his teacher.

Discipline is speaking distinctly with a pleasant, friendly voice. Students will listen more attentively and ask questions more spontaneously if the "sound effects" are pleasant and harmonious. Tape recording a few periods and playing them back can reveal to the teacher poor speech habits, such as lack of tone variation or overly numerous "uh's," that detract from presentations.

The teacher who does not speak simply or slowly enough for his students to understand easily may find that students release their feeling of frustration and inadequacy by finding compensating entertainment. When a student stops doing what the teacher wants him to do, he begins to do what he is tempted to do.

Discipline is teaching a subject in terms of the interest level of the class. The vocabulary challenges at times, but it is within the understanding of the class. Good current allusions, based on newspaper or magazine articles, are attention-getters which act as springboards to new lessons.

Discipline is questions and answers from the students. A discussion sparked by a student's questions is usually lively because interest is tapped and channeled. The best answer is the student answer. The teacher whose students not only raise questions but reason their way to the right answers practices a special kind of personal discipline. He controls his very human tendency to save time by "just telling" the class the answers. The right answer formulated by the students does more for their development than the most dynamically articulated answer the teacher could produce.

Discipline is utilizing the natural tendencies of the students. Carefully planned group discussions and buzz sessions, or occasions when students plan and take responsibility for their own activity, give the students the chance to express their desires and clarify their purposes. They also allow the young people to experience the success of influencing their group and to grow in personal security. Such sessions give students a legitimate reason for speaking as opposed to reciting during a class period, and for moving to another part of the room.

Discipline is perceiving and understanding causes of misbehavior. The perceptive teacher notices the student who comes to class burning with resentment and rebellion. Aware that he may have had trouble at home that morning or in his previous class, the teacher avoids any conflict which will aggravate the student's sense of injury and result in sullenness, insolence, or even violence.

The teacher realizes that many, if not all, of his students suffer from feelings of inferiority or inadequacy. Particularly affected are those who may feel out of the "in-group" because they are of a different race or religion, because they lack money, or because they cannot keep up mentally or physically.

The wise teacher knows that publicly demeaning a student or in any way implying rejection or ridicule is inviting misbehavior, which is often a defense mechanism.

Discipline is realizing that students are human beings. Students leave books and pencils at home. (Teachers forget things too.) To punish a student's forgetfulness by keeping him idle is retaliatory rather than remedial. The youngster feels conspicuous, frustrated; above all, he feels a sense of injury. The better course is for the teacher to provide the missing article and thus have a busy rather than a humiliated student. The "little talk" for chronic amnesia victims can come at the end of the period when he returns the article the teacher has loaned him.

Being human, students appreciate recognition. They are happy to be in charge of something. They are proud to be sent on errands, glad to be noticed in the hall.

When papers are returned, a comment by the teacher praising a mark, remarking on the completeness of a particular answer, or noting the neat attractive format or script, not only excites ambition but also promotes a pleasant teacher-pupil relationship. The morning after a play, a recital, or a game, the student who is complimented on his outstanding participation is an appreciative, cooperative person.

Discipline is knowing when to tighten, when to loosen, and when to hold firm. A class changes its mood with the weather, with the exciting rally students screamed through during the noon hour, with the warm library period they have just sat out, with the way things went in the last class, with the pictures that appeared in the morning's issue of the school paper. Students come into the classroom with an attitude toward the teacher engendered, perhaps, by their success or nonsuccess with the assignment.

Sometimes students come in quietly, sometimes in a stampede, sometimes laughing, sometimes bitterly arguing. The bell momentarily cuts off their stream of interest, and into this small space the teacher drives the line of action he expects the class to follow through the period. He directs their vitality. By clear, simply spoken instructions he puts them to work.

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If directions offer personal advantages to the students as individuals, the class as a whole will settle down. An effective means to calm a class is to have written recitation during the first 10 or 15 minutes. The teacher remarks that the lesson is of more than usual importance. He wants to credit every individual who has done the assignment with a successful recitation. Since it takes too long for each student to recite, each may earn a recitation credit by choosing two of the four questions to write on. Even if they do not finish writing in the allotted time, the work they have completed will indicate the quality of their preparation and the papers will be scored with that in mind.

Another time, he may have the student decide on the question or topic he found most interesting and then write on it for ten minutes. Students set to work with an optimistic spirit, glad to put their best answers forward. Just before they begin writing, the teacher directs their attention to the next day's assignment on the chalkboard. He suggests that if they finish the class exercise before the time is up, they look over the new material. He will answer any questions on the new assignment after the writing session is terminated. He indicates that the rest of the class period will be a build-up for the assigned work. Looking to their personal advantage, the students generally cooperate.

Sometimes a class needs waking up instead of calming down. On Monday, perhaps, when students are recuperating from a busy weekend (or giving the impression that they had the kind of weekend that requires recuperation), a buzz session can be profitable. It gives students an opportunity to compare notes, improve their homework papers, argue, and wake up.

Discipline is anticipating difficulties. The misbehaving individual makes a problem for the teacher and also for the class. During the first month of school the teacher checks without exception infringements of class or school regulations. One individual who "gets away with it" breeds others who will try. Planning for emergencies and anticipating problems develops and maintains teacher control, strengthens students' confidence in the teacher's authority, and establishes a receptive classroom atmosphere.

Finally, discipline is having effective attitudes. Effective attitudes stimulate pupils to action. Creative thinking develops in the classroom of a teacher who shows that he appreciates a student's point of view. An instructor who is really thrilled with his subject effectively presents it as an intellectual adventure, a colorful discovery that induces similar excitement in his students. An instructor who shows interest in student affairs, who not only listens to student problems but contributes to their solutions, is an effective teacher in the classroom, in the conference room, in the give-and-take of a lunchroom situation.

Teachers' discipline is essentially self-discipline. The young teacher who is hopeful yet fearful, ambitious yet humble, idealistic yet practical, with everything to give, with everything to lose, will find his success in proportion to his ability to know himself and to use that knowledge in personal and professional growth.

SECONDARY

WHAT THE BOOKS DON'T TELL YOU

Jane Tylor Field

WHEN THERE IS a deviation from standard classroom behavior — when something wildly funny or wildly infuriating or wildly frightening or just hopelessly pathetic happens, something that the education courses neglected to dwell on — what will you do?

The proper and specific action depends, of course, upon what the incident is; upon the person or persons involved, including you; upon your school administration; and upon your community. But there are certain things it should be helpful to remember.

First, do not let anyone know that you are shook up, either by hysterics, pity, or horror. In the classroom, you are mother, father, counselor, tea and sympathy all in one. You are expected to be a rock, no matter what. So, though you may be blancmange inside, make like obsidian for your audience.

Second, try to remember any relevant administration policy which may have been discussed in faculty meetings. If the incident is one of a type for which a formula has been worked out, conform! Do not try to set a precedent with new strategy: for instance, if smoking by students on school property is grounds for suspension, report any offenders immediately. This is no time to lecture on the possibility of cancer.

Third, if necessary, *ask* for assistance. The nurse, administrators, counselors, and the vast majority of your colleagues are willing to back you up or lend their special skills wherever needed, and teamwork has long been noted for its superiority over lone wolf efforts.

Along the same line, do not forget to call a parent-teacher conference if it seems wise to do so. After all, parents are people too. Sometimes they are impossible, but for the most part they are like their kids — willing to learn if they think they are hearing the truth.

They may have no idea that their offspring is the class clown or the class black sheep or the class sad sack. Certainly they will seldom be complacent about such revelations. Most parents are only too anxious to help their children be happy and successful, and they know that there is no truer maxim in the world than that success breeds success. Clowning, goofing off, pining away, and like activities use energy which should be put to more constructive use, and parents know it well.

Fourth, do not let a molehill into a mountain grow. Keep things quiet. Don't let everybody get into the act. Don't even let it become an act.

Fifth, be objective. Do not take personally anything that may happen, even if it is of an insulting or belittling nature. Remember that no matter how charming or marvelous a person you are, as a teacher you represent authority, and there are times when authority is resented for its own sake.

Sixth, if the event has been one where you were fortunate enough to make some child's life a little happier or more comfortable, do not dwell on that either. Which is to say, don't talk about it. Be discreet. Don't tell everything you know. Just remember the channels by which such results were accomplished in case you might want to go through them again sometime.

Finally, remember that there will be friction and irritation and pathos and laughter in any job that deals with people, and teaching is certainly one which does. Therefore new human problems will ever arise and old ones will be repeated. Regard them with humor if possible, profit by past experience, refrain from wasting physical or nervous energy on them, and conserve most of your strength for your biggest job, that of helping students to learn.

SECONDARY

CLASSROOM CONTROL IN THE HIGH SCHOOL

Emelie Ruth Dodge

AS I STOOD BEFORE my first eleventh-grade English class many Septembers ago, a full-fledged teacher at last, I enthusiastically looked over the 30 pupils whose lives I was going to mold, and my heart sang, "Mine! These are mine! I can do anything I want with them!"

This power-mad era in my life was brief, but it was years before I realized that behind the silence and order of my first day of school were concealed 30 scouts reconnoitering enemy territory. In my case, the report must have gone back, "Sitting duck!"

I was unprepared to cope with problems in classroom behavior. I knew the history of educational philosophy; I was familiar with educational terminology; I accepted the principle of permissive atmosphere. But no textbook or lecture had dealt with flying missiles, strange noises from unknown quarters, out-of-control discussions, chronic tardiness, impertinence, effrontery, or any of the other devices for retarding classroom progress.

"Discipline," in its connotations of demand and punishment, of autocratic authority, went out of style about 25 years ago. But because to teach remains the paramount purpose of teachers, and since this purpose cannot be accomplished without classroom order, "discipline" is still necessary although it wears a new and prettier dress. We see it walking abroad as "control."

Superintendents demand teachers who can control students; boards of education dismiss teachers who lack classroom control.

What, then, can new teachers do to deal with problems of classroom control? Teachers colleges and textbooks have some helpful general discussion of the matter, although they seldom go into detail about methods. Articles in education journals may be useful, and advice from experienced teachers can provide aid.

However, since the very same classroom problem rarely arises twice, a pat answer or case history isn't of much value. Furthermore, each teacher's personality has a different impact on students, and, therefore, each teacher is forced to discover his own particular way of handling a problem.

I have found that the most sensible way to handle the matter of classroom control is by not allowing problems to develop.

My brief but potent experience has revealed some general procedures which boys and girls have seemed to find fair and logical and which I find helpful in preventing unpleasant classroom situations.

Several recent surveys of what students consider as the characteristics of a good teacher list fairness as a first requisite. This sounds simple. However, fairness involves constant vigilance on the teacher's part, careful attention to consistency, faithful warning in advance, and several weeks of patient waiting while the students test and observe.

To say that a teacher is fair neither convinces students nor makes it true. Having dealt with adults for years, students have learned that adults are inconsistent, inattentive, moody, and capricious.

Adults have severely punished youngsters on one day for an offense which, on another, merely receives a reprimand. And knowing that every grownup has a weak spot, youngsters have coaxed their elders into or out of decisions, have gotten away with deeds under the noses of preoccupied parents and teachers, have successfully and fraudulently appealed to the sympathy of adults to win their desires.

In short, boys and girls are what they are because of what adults, advertently and inadvertently, have taught them in and out of the classrooms.

If you want to build a reputation for fairness among your students, these principles may prove valuable to you:

Don't threaten unless you can, and intend to, fulfill the threat. Don't promise unless you can, and intend to, fulfill the promise. It will take only one unfulfilled threat or promise to assure your boys and girls that you are no exception to their rapidly crystallizing conviction that adults are three-quarters hot air.

Don't break a rule for anyone unless the entire class can see that it is an emergency. There are times when exceptions must be made; but when these cannot be postponed and handled in private conference, the class should be allowed to see that an exception is necessary.

Stick to school rules yourself. Frequently, it is not required that you observe them; however, do not break rules or equivocate before your students. If an assembly seems a waste of time, you can accomplish no good by going to sleep, "cutting," or being obviously bored. If there is a tardy bell, observe it yourself. Don't wander into your classroom late and expect your status to excuse you.

Always tell students the truth. It is better to say that you don't think they need to know than to risk being caught in even the most innocent and generous lie, and you will be amazed at how much the class can accept and understand.

Your students will hang around after school to talk things over and will seek your advice on the most personal matters once they decide that you are honest. But if you are to win their confidence, don't condemn too quickly their sweeping generalizations or their denunciation of the institutions most of us cherish. They must question everything. *Let them!* You and I have decided what we think about a good many things. They have that same right. But when they ask you what you think, tell them the truth.

Keep your classroom rules short and simple. Don't establish long lists of dos and don'ts, but make five or six basic and inclusive statements and then stick to them.

Always make your demands clear to everyone ahead of time. Don't give a pupil a chance to say: "But I was absent the day you gave us that!" Write your requirements and assignments on the board to be copied into notebooks, or give out mimeographed sheets. Then make absolutely certain that these instructions are understood.

The students' second requisite for a good teacher is knowledge of subject matter. If your boys and girls respect you as a person who knows what he's talking about, who is widely informed, and who works hard and consistently at his job, your problems in discipline will be fewer.

Come to class each day prepared to utilize every minute of the period. As I think over the unpleasant situations I've experienced in class, I find that they almost invariably occurred because the students were not really busy.

At least three different types of activity during one 50-minute period, such as a spelling quiz, a 15-minute discussion, and a short lecture, will provide variety and will keep students too well occupied to engage in class-disrupting entertainment. Always plan more than you can do in a period, so that if you see signs of boredom and restlessness, you can switch your activity and again avoid difficulty before it occurs.

In spite of all this golden advice, you will probably find some disciplinary situations arising in your classes. These are best handled unobtrusively on an individual basis.

Don't *ask* a student if he will stop an annoyance. He will feel compelled to answer you, and the answer will probably be impudent. Simply *tell* him to stop whatever he is doing and then go on with what you were doing at once without waiting for a retort.

Any red-blooded student is aware that his friends are watching to see what will happen. If you give him the slightest opportunity to answer back, he will simply have to do so. Don't appeal to him by suggesting or implying that he is different from the others, that he has more ability than the others, or that he may expect sympathy because he has a problem at home. Young people want to be treated as individuals, but not singled out as different—even if they are.

I have found that normal teen-agers deeply resent special treatment. For the most part, they do not understand why or how they get into painful situations, but they feel that in treating them as psychological cases, teachers and deans are exhibiting a total lack of understanding and are making a crisis out of a crocus.

Many high school students will play on the sympathy of their teachers at every opportunity and later kill themselves laughing at the teachers' credulity. This arouses students' contempt, which writes finis to classroom control.

Your consistent refusal to accept late work or to make exceptions on the strength of tales of woe will be accepted with sheepish grins if you turn them away with, "Stop it! You're breaking my heart!" Parrying with a light and slightly flippant touch is often successful, as long as your foil is not dipped in the acid of sarcasm. Refusal to take a wheedling student seriously does not mean letting him—or the class—think you're ridiculing or belittling him.

You should try to be pleasant, you may be amusing, but always be firm. Any new group of students probably will not accept the fact, at first, that you mean what you say. They will continue to search for weaknesses. Expect, too, that you won't be able to be perfectly consistent all the time.

But if students know that you are trying to be fair, if they can respect your knowledge and industry, and if they feel that you sincerely like them, they will be less interested in humiliating or annoying you, in retarding class progress, or in seeking amusement of an unpleasant nature during class time. In fact, given the right classroom climate, self-discipline will flourish in a gratifying way.

Students will feel increasingly secure in your presence as they become more sure of their ground. When they know what to expect, they will feel happier and more comfortable, and so will you.

SECONDARY

A LESSON IN DISCIPLINE

Teresa Foley

WE WERE A TERRIBLE CLASS. Every class likes to remember that it was pure hellion, but the thirty of us who started under Miss Gallagher at the Down School near the Buick garage really were terrible. We came along just when the argument between the phonics people and the associationists was at its height. We went at reading for three years by the word-recognition method and then in the fourth grade the teacher insisted that we learn to read all over again by sounds. We were also caught in the controversy over manuscript and cursive writing. And we hit the crisis in arithmetic.

In the beginning of the fifth grade, we were forbidden to use brackets in finding the lowest common denominator. We had to go click-click to an equivalent fraction instead, seeing all the pieces of pie in our heads. This meant that nobody at home (Who had Gestaltists in their families?) could help us any more. But, willing sneaks, we drew brackets with furtive fingers on our pants legs.

Child-centered psychology burgeoned in our town at this time. We were allowed to do some ridiculous things in school because we wanted to. When our parents heard about them, they were furious at first. Then they decided that the school must know what it was doing, and they let us do the same things and worse at home. Finally, like beer chasers after an evening of Mickey Finns, came comic books and television.

Every year for six years we grew stupider and lazier and fresher and more obnoxious. No one ever separated any of us, or kept any of us back, or adulterated us with new blood. We were a terrible package, referred to by certain members of the PTA as "Les Misérables."

Then came the seventh year and Miss Barracombie.

She was new to the school that year, so we did not have the usual case studies on her from previous classes. Her looks might have given us a clue, but we had always known amateur, experimental teachers so we did not recognize the career teacher when we saw her. She was perhaps fifty, tall, square-shouldered, and erect; neither feminine nor mannish, merely healthy and strong. Her face was handsome but not pretty. She had no subtle expressions: she smiled outright, she frowned outright, or she concentrated. Her voice was not harsh but had a peculiar carrying quality, vibrating longer than most. Eugene Kent took off his hearing-aid after the first day.

She greeted us that day as no teacher ever had. No talk of adjustment here, no plea for growth, no challenge to find ourselves. She said:

"My name is Virginia Barracombie and it will be Miss Barracombie to you indefinitely. One of these days you will meet someone from the last school in which I taught. The worst that he tells you about me will be true. It's a far cry from child to man, and it's not through games that we get there. You and I are bound together in a contract for one year: I teach; you learn. Behave yourselves and pay attention and this will be one of the good years of your lives. You have a minute to prepare yourself with ruler, compass, pencil, and paper for a review of the meaning and use of decimals."

It was the shock treatment all right—but with economy, with the clarity of piano keys struck singly, above all with authority. We had neither the opportunity nor the mind to look across the aisles at each other until recess. We were at work in the first five minutes—we, who always had a period in which to get ready to get ready. It was a blow to our unit pride, but we were less cohesive after the long summer and temporarily distracted from getting together on what to do about it.

We thought at first that we were just going along with her in a momentary tolerance. She was novelty, and among teachers that was hard to find. Then we found ourselves bound in a work routine. At that point some of us tried to bolt.

In its reactions to Miss Barracombie the class divided into four groups. Several of the nicer girls and a couple of the boys who had strict scholastic accountability to professional parents went into her camp almost immediately when they saw that she was systematic, skillful, and just. Another group, whose names and faces are always hard to remember, went along with her because they sensed that she was a stronger personality; that balking would be tiring, involve exposure of weakness, and end in failure. These two groups accounted for perhaps two-thirds of the class. In the remaining third were the Idiot rebels and the Hard-nut rebels.

The Idiots moved in first, without seeing where they were going. For example:

Idiot: "Do we *have* to put our names on our compositions?" (looking around at the other Idiots for appreciative laughter).

Miss B.: "You don't *have* to."

Idiot: (Next day after papers had been passed back) "I didn't get my paper back. I haven't no grade."

Miss B.: "Did you expect one?"

Idiot: "You said we didn't *have* to put our names on them."

Miss B.: "That's right. You don't *have* to walk around with your eyes open, either."

The Idiot sat down, uneasily. That afternoon his name was up with the absentees who had to make up the composition.

The Idiots were beaten from the start. She was indifferent to petty annoyances, and they did not dare try big ones.

The Hard-nuts, the long-time heroes, waited more patiently, seeking their own ground. Their particular dragon in the case of Miss Barracombie was her good sense, which forced an antagonist to assume a role so foolish as to threaten his status among his classmates. This forced the Hard-nuts to try to operate outside the teaching periods, in the rather limited areas of truancy, ground rules, and personal relationships.

It was difficult to challenge her with truancy because there our parents were solidly on her side, and besides, the occasional absence or trumped-up tardiness of an individual did little to alter the steady civilizing routine. As for opportunities on the school grounds, Miss Barracombie supervised only in her turn, and was by some unexpected quirk more lenient than any of the other teachers, letting us proceed at games considerably rougher than we wished to be playing.

The worst of the Hard-nuts was Lennie Sopel. He was big and tough and bearded already, very much in the know about engines, baseball statistics, and older women. He had a way of muttering wisecracks half under his breath when girls recited. At first they reached only to people in the surrounding seats. Then one day as Lila Crocker went down the aisle, Lennie said in a loud whisper that shook the room like an east wind, "Oh, man. I wish I had that swing in my back yard!"

Miss Barracombie stopped listening to a girl at the study table. The girl stopped talking. Lila fled to the waste basket and back to her seat, her face scarlet.

The room became as silent as a tomb in a pyramid.

Miss Barracombie looked at Lennie for a long time, and he locked eyes with her, ready for a showdown.

"What are you thinking about, Lennie?" she asked at last, rather softly for her.

"Nothin'." He could say that one word as though it were the nastiest in the language. "Absolutely nothin'."

"Well, I'm thinking about something," she said still calm and relaxed. "You come in at three and I'll tell you about it. In the meantime, stand up."

"What for? What'd I do?"

"Stand up, please."

Lennie hesitated. Again it was one of her simple inescapable requests. He slid out into the aisle and stood up.

Miss Barracombie went back to her work with the girl at the table. Lennie started to sit down once, but she gave him a steady eye and he straightened up again. He had to stand by his seat throughout the rest of the afternoon. We kept looking at him, waiting for him to say something; Lennie couldn't seem to think of anything to say.

She kept him after school forty-five minutes every day for six months. He never spoke out of turn again in class and he never missed a session with her. It seemed a heavy punishment for one remark, and we couldn't get over either her giving it or his taking it. When we asked him what he had to do, all he would say was, "Nothin'. She just gives me hell."

"For forty hours, Lennie?"

"Who's countin'? And whose business?"

Then one day Alice Rowe gave us the lowdown. She had been helping in the inner office when the intercom was open to Miss Barracombie's room.

"She's teaching him to read."

Nobody would believe her. Lennie's in seventh grade, everybody said. He knows how to read.

"No, he doesn't," Alice said. "I heard him stumbling over the littlest words up there. Who's ever heard him read in class?"

We tried to remember when we had heard Lennie read. He was a transfer to us in the fourth grade, and there hadn't been much oral reading since then.

"How does he do his other work?" we asked.

"Who says he does?"

No wonder Lennie couldn't fight her. She taught him in secret the one thing he needed to have to give up cheating and pretending.

The truth was, no rebellion had a chance with her. She wasn't mean and she never struck anybody (although our parents queried us over and over again on this point, wanting, we thought, to be able to say, "Of course, she has order! She whips them.") No situation could come up that she would not know how to handle efficiently and without damage to her single drive: she would teach; we would learn.

Whatever we studied, we mastered. Of course, she knew the ones of us who could not connect with the main lines she was trolling, but she put out other lines for them and they mastered, too. Nobody was free not to learn. We were free to fail, but somehow a failure was not a separate thing, only a step in learning. She never assumed that we had achieved. She probed and exposed until she read it in the blood. A week later when we were not expecting it, she would check again. She was the only teacher whose grades on our report cards we never questioned. Nor would we let our indignant parents go to her. She knew.

This was no love affair between the class and Miss Barracombie, however. She was businesslike and not tender with us. She encouraged no intimacies and the thought of confiding in her as we had in Miss Tondreau who used to love us in the third grade was wholly ridiculous. We were just different with her. When our special teachers came and Miss Barracombie left the room, Eugene Kent would replace his hearing-aid, and we would be at once on the Plain of Esdraelon, stalking a world of enemies. By the end of the period our specials would be limp and distraught.

We did no better left on our own. If Miss Barracombie stepped out of the room—something she wisely did rarely—we would hit the ceiling. After all, we had been indulged for years. Thirty near-simians don't slough that off in a few stretching months. We had never been convinced that discipline comes from within, and when the restraining presence was removed we reverted to the barbarians that we were.

Miss Barracombie never mentioned our behavior with other teachers or when she was out of the room, although the specials must have complained bitterly. It seemed to be part of her code that she was responsible when she was with us and others were responsible when they took us. We liked that. Miss Barracombie did not lecture or make us feel guilty. There was nothing to lecture or feel guilty about. We behaved. We learned. We had to: it was the contract.

But the final lesson we learned from Miss Barracombie was one she did not try to teach us. It was during the last period. We were in the midst of a discussion on the use of quotation marks. The intercom box pinged on the wall and the principal said:

"A telegram has just arrived for you, Miss Barracombie. Will you send a boy down for it?"

She sent Herbert Harvey Bell. He was in the corner seat by the door. He went out running because she knew exactly how long it took to get to the office and back and he did not want to answer for loitering.

He returned with the telegram, gave it to her, and took his seat.

She opened the envelope calmly and neatly so as not to tear the inside sheet. Still reading it, she turned about slowly so that her back was toward the class. Her hands lowered. We could see that she was no longer looking at the telegram but at the bulletin board. She did not turn back to us. She kept looking at something on the board.

Then before the alerted, somehow apprehensive eyes of the class, Miss Barracombie began to grow smaller. It was in her shoulders first. They began to narrow, to go forward. Her back curved. Her head dropped. We waited, not knowing what to do. Herbert Harvey Bell seemed to feel the most responsible. He looked around at all of us with a question in his wide, stunned eyes. We had nothing for him. Herbert Harvey pulled himself up from his seat and ran across the hall to the teacher there.

Lennie Sopel had started down from his seat, but when he saw the other teacher, Mrs. Hamilton, coming, he turned and went back up the aisle.

Mrs. Hamilton went up to Miss Barracombie and peered into her face. Then she bent to the telegram still in her hands.

"Oh, my dear," she said and put her arm around Miss Barracombie. Miss Barracombie did not move. Her shoulders were gone, melted into her narrow back.

Mrs. Hamilton turned her in the direction of the door. Our teacher put both hands across her face and, huddled and small, walked out like a child under Mrs. Hamilton's arm.

No one breathed or moved. A few minutes later Mrs. Hamilton looked into our room.

"Miss Barracombie has lost someone dear to her, boys and girls. Try to finish the period quietly."

No one came near us for the rest of the afternoon, not even to dismiss us. But we did not behave as we usually did when left alone.

Most of us took out our composition notebooks and pens. Some just sat there.

We were frightened—a little sad for Miss Barracombie, of course—but mainly frightened, and frightened for ourselves. If she could be struck down, who was so tall, so erect, with all things under control, what could not happen to the rest of us who never had any control on the inside, who had to be made by others to hold our shoulders back?

We were the best we had ever been until the bell rang that day. For a moment we could see our connection with adults. Through a maze of equivalent fractions and common denominators we could see other people, huddled and shrinking, being led out of strange rooms. And their faces were ours.

SECONDARY

SUSPENSION NEED NOT BE PUNISHMENT

Roger W. Chapman

SCHOOLS HAVE TRADITIONALLY used suspension as a form of punishment, usually as a last resort. The Modesto, California, city schools adopted a program of therapeutic suspension in 1957 and have used it with success and acceptance since that time.

The procedure is based upon four premises: (a) that setting definite limits on behavior can relieve anxiety and promote learning, (b) that limits must be enforced consistently, (c) that each person has within himself the strength to solve his own problems, and (d) that when an adult accepts responsibility for a child's behavior, the child may have little need for self-control.

The program is used with any child from kindergarten through grade 12 who chronically misbehaves or seriously lacks self-control. The child is sent home on any day that he is not able to conform to a set of standards agreed upon by the teacher, pupil, and his parents. There are no other penalties, threats, or promises.

He returns the next day and stays as long as he is able to conform to the rules. When he fails to conform, he is not spoken to but quietly presented with a slip of paper, his signal to go to the office. His parents are called and the child goes home or is picked up by his family.

The family is requested not to scold or punish him or even to ask him why he lost the privilege of being in school. Parents are asked to confine him to his home during the balance of the day but not to restrict his normal activities there. He returns to his class the next morning without an excuse and meets with no comment—only a friendly welcome.

Most children begin to conform after five to ten suspensions. Success can usually be assured if parents and teachers have worked faithfully at playing their respective roles: the teacher, understanding, friendly, and consistent; the parent, concerned but nonpunitive.

The parent must be willing to communicate to the child that it is the latter's problem and that his parents have no power to keep him in school. Even severely disturbed or brain-injured children have shown remarkable powers of self-control when they were convinced that all responsibility to stay in school belonged to them.

Evaluation of systematic suspension shows that the program's success may depend as much upon the teacher's change of behavior as upon any change in the pupil. A disturbing pupil is a threat to the teacher. Elimination of the threat relieves the teacher. As his anxiety lessens, the relationship improves. Each sees the other in a different perspective. The pupil has less need to use misbehavior for manipulating the adult.

Systematic suspension has yielded most successful results when the following steps were employed: (a) the pupil met with the school psychologist, (b) he received a thorough health examination, (c) parents, teacher, principal, and psychologist held a conference for clarification of the plan, a copy of which the parents took home for further study, (d) parents then called the school to accept the plan, (e) the principal explained its operation to the pupil, (f) teacher and parents adhered rigidly to the program as outlined for them.

SECONDARY | CHEATING

John Carter Weldon

AN ALMOST unnoticeable but periodic tap, tap, tapping at the back of the room during a test gradually penetrated my professorial mind. Joe and Mac, who I knew had been in a communications unit during their military service, were using the International Code and their pencils to help each other with the questions.

It was my duty as a teacher to stop their ingenious cheating, but if I accused them directly, they could look innocent and pass it off as nervous pencil drumming. An old Navy signalman myself, I waited till Mac sent his next plea to Joe, then tapped out, "The answer to 27, Mac, is C."

Looking up, I met their startled glances squarely with a smile, and they grinned back, a little feebly.

Joe and Mac were grown men who must have been mature enough to realize, after my unspoken rebuke, that cheating hurts only the cheater, for they went on to become conscientious students.

It is not often so easy to "cure" cheating, yet it is a problem every teacher must face even though he knows that only a minority of his students are susceptible and that very few become inveterate cheaters. The discerning teacher understands that a basic cause of cheating is the student's lack of confidence in his ability to stand upon his own two feet.

Cheating is a delicate problem, best corrected by tact and diplomacy exercised in ways which do not harm the student or jeopardize his position as an accepted member of the class. If it is necessary to speak to a student, private counsel is always better than public reprimand.

Sometimes a negative nod of the head is sufficient to prevent a student from cheating. Moving him to another seat is a temporary yet helpful remedy. Intermittently rearranging the entire seating plan of the class helps, but it removes the honest student from a location in the classroom he has become accustomed to, and it may cause unwarranted distraction for him during tests because of his unfamiliar surroundings.

Before students succumb to the temptation of cheating, they should be counseled and convinced that a student who cheats hurts not only himself but everyone around him. They should be taught to respect their classmates and to honor their rights and privileges.

Methods used to correct cheating practices *after* they have begun are often severe and not too successful. Sometimes, depending on the individual student, the teacher may decide to nip cheating in the bud at its first evidence, and the student may learn more from this decisive action than he could from all the counseling the teacher can offer.

Generally, however, the direct action method tends to set up behavior patterns with contrary effects. The student, often responding through his defense mechanisms, misinterprets remedial tactics and welcomes the recognition he is getting from his teacher and the notoriety his fellow students inadvertently award him. Feeling, perhaps subconsciously, that he must live up to his reputation, he may tend to become a habitual cheater.

The wise teacher, I believe, is one who tries to avoid student cheating by building the right class and individual attitudes.

I used to think that counseling students about cheating at the beginning of each semester would be sufficient. That was a mistake. Twice a year is just not enough. Experience has proved, furthermore, that talking about cheating becomes pointless when it is nothing more than mere reiteration. It must capture the student's eternally wandering imagination; it must be varied with a positive degree of fascination.

Guidance in the classroom must contain ample manifestations of friendship and understanding, the student must feel that he is held in unqualified respect, and he must have an honest desire to understand and to cooperate with his classmates.

Here are some reminders I have heard employed when test papers are distributed on exam day:

"If you feel an urge to copy, make sure you get the right answer. Your neighbor can be wrong, you know. It's absurd to copy *mistakes!*"

"Only one copy of this test is needed from each student, so you do not have to accept the responsibility to turn in your neighbor's work. You turn in yours, and let your neighbor struggle along the best he knows how!"

And for the student who has a tendency to copy because he is "all tied up":

"If you're knotted up inside or you can't think straight today, stand up, stretch your limbs as far as they'll go—without going into orbit, of course! It'll help you do your own work better."

Now although these reminders are somewhat facetious, they do not pointedly threaten a single student, cast undue suspicion upon anyone, harp upon the traditional "If you cheat, I'll skin you alive!" or "Cheating is wrong" theme. They serve to relieve the student of a natural disposition to be nervous before an examination, and they help lift all students above the cheating level.

SECONDARY

THE TEACHER AND PREVENTIVE DISCIPLINE

Adah Peckenpaugh

I'VE BEEN TOLD that more teachers leave the profession because they cannot—or fear they cannot—maintain discipline than for any other reason. This seems particularly unfortunate in view of the fact that few students, proportionately, cause disciplinary problems.

Before any teacher allows this small minority to send him into a tailspin, he should face three simple facts: Every teacher has to deal with difficult students; there are no set formulas for handling them; children are not born "bad," and "badness" doesn't just happen.

The best cue for action lies in the third point: Avoid the development of behavior problems by practicing preventive discipline. This requires a growing, or at least a constant, ability on the teacher's part to recognize promptly the signs that may portend trouble. Which students are characteristically inattentive? Consistently fail to cooperate? Are careless in dress and manners? Seem overly anxious to gain recognition? When such signs appear, investigate their causes and start corrective measures.

No one thing does so much to keep students on good behavior, especially in the higher grades, as does an atmosphere of work and study in the classroom. Every pupil knows he is there to learn. Don't let him forget it, or succeed in making you forget it. Don't be afraid that you will lose your popularity by firmness. Sticking by rules never costs the teacher an ounce of student esteem as long as the rules are fair and are adhered to consistently.

But a businesslike classroom need not be a humorless one. Keep your sense of humor at all times, and tell a funny story now and then. You don't have to preface each lesson with a joke, but use a good one occasionally to break the tension and show that you are human. And you can be human without being familiar or allowing students to become familiar with you.

There is a great difference, of course, between the familiar and the personal. It is important to be genuinely interested in each student.

The teacher, to be sure, cannot control the size of his classes, nor can the principal, in many cases. Yet the administration can help by keeping classroom interruptions to a minimum and by trying to avoid late-afternoon scheduling of difficult subjects.

Even in larger classes, however, the alert teacher can build bridges between himself and his students by treating each one as an individual and by responding to the requests each one makes.

Often children may be reached by your showing an interest in their hobbies. A project assignment can be related to a hobby, and an occasional inquiry about the youngster's guppies, for example, can help you establish rapport with him.

All right—I know as well as anybody that the quiet reminder that works wonders with sixth-grade Sally may roll right off Joe Blow's leather jacket as he swaggers through the high-school corridors. So, if Joe swaggers into real trouble, don't be afraid to discipline him, or to send him to your principal, or to call his parents into conference. But don't make Joe feel that parents, principal, and teacher are in league against him. Hear his side of the story. Encourage him to offer his solutions.

If his parents lack the ability to face their son's problems constructively and cooperatively, abandon this avenue of help—but don't abandon Joe. He will need you more than ever then. You may be the most helpful adult with whom he comes in daily contact.

We should remember that boys' and girls' behavior cannot be separated from the behavior of people in general. While we are trying to teach our students to think, we are also, consciously or unconsciously, setting them an example. But never put on an act for them. Be sincere, be consistent, be firm, and be friendly.

SECONDARY

TIPS FOR THE BEGINNING TEACHER

Martha W. Hunt

MAY an old hand give a beginning teacher some tips about keeping classroom discipline? I have found these procedures helpful:

Learn names. Whenever possible, be familiar before your first class session with the names of your students and with the pronunciation of each name.

Look over the permanent records. Foresight is better than hindsight. The records will give you clues to students' hearing and vision defects or other physical ailments, family relationships, and emotional disturbances which affect learning rates. IQ scores will give some indication of whether or not students are working to capacity. If not, trouble will probably develop sooner or later.

Check the classroom environment. Have the temperature and ventilation as right as you can make them. Draw shades to cut out glare if necessary, but be sure there are no dark corners. See that classroom furniture and accessories are in order and that no seats are placed so that students have to face the light.

Watch seating. Big students should not block the line of vision of smaller students. Place students with defective vision or faulty hearing near you.

Plan the lesson. Be ready to use the first minute of class time. If you get Johnny busy right away, he has no time to cook up interesting ideas that do not fit into the class situation.

Learn symptoms of illness. Misconduct often has a physiological basis. Learn the meaning of a flushed face, reddening and watering eyes, a skin rash.

Deal with individuals. Instead of having an entire class sit around marking time while you reprimand one offender, arrange to have a private appointment with him outside class.

Practice marginal vision. You can learn to see out of the corners of your eyes.

Mind your manners. Student behavior often reflects a teacher's good or bad manners.

Don't stay glued to your desk. Move about. Sit in the back of the room when class reports are being given—it accents student responsibility.

Use of bit of ritual. I find code signals handy. In my school, gum chewing is forbidden, so I give a person-to-person reminder by sign language. I rapidly close and open my thumb and forefinger (imitating jaw motion), and then, like a baseball umpire calling out the runner, I motion with my thumb toward the wastebasket.

The class is not distracted; I wait until I catch the eye of the offender, give my code signal, and let the business of the class go on. For talking or whispering, a finger on my closed lips may be enough. Codes are short cuts and can save time and energy if introduced with good humor.

Relate learning to life plans. The sooner you know the career plans, interests, and even the hobbies of your students, the more successful you will be in directing all their energies into constructive channels.

Be yourself. Pick up ideas wherever you can, but be yourself and teach in the way that is right for you.

SECONDARY | AS STUDENTS SEE THEIR TEACHERS

Roy C. Bryan

"SHE CAN BE STRICT and nice at the same time."

"Sometimes he says things in a joking way without realizing he is hurting someone's feelings."

These statements are typical of what secondary students say about their teachers when they are asked to name one or two things they especially like about a teacher or to mention some ways in which a teacher might improve. The Student Reaction Center at Western Michigan University is using the students' anonymous comments in preparing "teacher image reports" for teachers who request them.

What do students like about teachers? What don't they like? Following, in the students' own words, are various students' appraisals of five different teachers:

Teacher A:

He has ability to keep the class moving.
He always seems to know what he is talking about.
He has ability to make people think for themselves.
He is very helpful and tries to understand the students' viewpoint.
He is very neat and well-dressed.
You feel as though he enjoys teaching.
His enthusiasm makes you feel like helping in the discussions.
He makes sure that everyone understands.

Teacher B:

He wastes too much time.
His conversation and jokes are often suggestive and sometimes shady.
He should take more time and interest preparing for this class.
He should refrain from implying sex so much.

Teacher C:

She could try to do something about making the class more interesting.

She should be more fair in her ways of discipline.

She is too lenient in the classroom. The constant uproar in the classroom distracts those who wish to learn.

She should get all the facts before disciplining someone.

She should enforce the rules she sets up.

Teacher D:

He needs more patience. He should be more sympathetic.

He shouldn't embarrass students when they give their opinions in class.

He should use a little less sarcasm.

He shouldn't take it out on the students when he has a bad day.

Teacher E:

She is kind, considerate, and helpful.

She asks opinions and lets us speak our minds freely.

She gives her time to help students after school.

She is very patient and understanding.

I like the way she encourages students.

When I do a good job on a paper, she compliments me.

Many teachers believe that becoming informed on the factors that may be militating against good student-teacher relationships is an important step in improving student reactions. The 1963-64 annual report of the Student Reaction Center contains data which show that 90 percent of the 183 teachers who participated in a survey said that image reports had been helpful to them.

Improved student reactions mean improved teacher effectiveness. *Other things being equal,* the teacher who conducts classes that students find challenging and interesting is more effective than the one who conducts classes that bore students; the teacher who gets cooperation in the pursuit of classroom objectives is more effective than one who fails to get students to concentrate on classroom business; and the teacher who is loved and respected is more effective than the one who is hated or regarded with contempt.

THE CLASS CLOWN

The class clown has the whole room laughing as he imitates animal noises. When the teacher asks him to stop, he says, "No"; so she asks the class to drop everything and listen to Jim. That silences him. Four consultants comment.

The Incident

One morning in the third week of my first practice teaching assignment, both my critic teacher and the principal were observing my class when Jim, the class clown, decided to perform. Keeping a perfectly straight face, the boy imitated a variety of sounds—growling like a dog, moaning like a distant air raid siren, mooing like a cow—in an ingenious demonstration that produced howls of laughter from other students.

The incident was the first purposeful misbehavior I had encountered in my class. My response was to feel that I must immediately do something—though I didn't know what—to demonstrate to students and observers alike that I was in control and would not tolerate disturbances of this kind.

I asked Jim if he would postpone his imitations until after school, whereupon he sent his classmates into further paroxysms of mirth by answering, "No."

Now what to do? My self-confidence was waning fast. Frantically groping for a solution, I announced that the whole class would stop work for a minute to listen to Jim. The idea of being asked to perform stunned him into silence and class work was resumed.

Consultants' Comments

Kenneth L. Bean, *professor of psychology, Baylor University, Waco, Texas:*

There's nothing new about having the clown of a junior high school class choose an inopportune moment to perform. Recent trends in American culture, however, seem to encourage him by letting him get away with his antics, whereas formerly accepted practice would have nipped them in the bud.

I believe that today's teen-agers respect an adult who can apply a sense of humor to emergencies such as the one we're considering. If the teacher could have come up with a remark that would have stolen the show from Jim by getting a bigger laugh than his act did, probably no further disturbance would have occurred—for a while, at least.

Instead, the teacher responded just as Jim expected and wanted her to do. Her distraction and annoyance—and then her invitation to him to take over the class—encouraged him to satisfy his need for recognition in a socially unacceptable way. Although having the class stop work to listen to Jim ended an intolerable situation momentarily, it probably did not discourage a repeat performance.

Sound procedure would involve trying to draw the clown into serious discussion. This acceptable type of recognition might satisfy his need to attract attention.

If, however, the boy feels rejected at home and ignored at school, about the only course of action is sending him to the office for the rest of the period, talking with him privately, at a later time, and depriving him of privileges that he values at school.

Under the circumstances, it was quite understandable that the new teacher felt insecure when her authority was threatened by the defiant teen-ager.

Sociologists and psychologists have written at length on the predicament of the modern adolescent, who, given more latitude than his counterpart in former generations was allowed, does not know how to handle either himself or his responsibilities. Logically, adults feel less secure with him and more threatened by him than would have been true several generations ago.

Bernice Grunwald, *teacher, Emerson Elementary School, Gary, Indiana; staff member, Alfred Adler Institute, Chicago:*

The student teacher took the only action which could bring positive results. Her action was not too hasty. She had to do something, for in most situations in which a child is actually destructive, the teacher's failure to do anything may be interpreted as a go-ahead signal encouraging the child to think that he can become a big shot through this kind of behavior.

Before any teacher, experienced or not, can handle misbehavior effectively, he must know its cause. He can find the cause only by observing the child in all phases of school life. Every child needs the status gained through feeling socially accepted and secure. The child who is prevented from achieving recognition through constructive contributions seeks proof of his acceptance through socially disapproved methods.

The class clown is a socially maladjusted child who tries to distract attention from his inadequacies by putting on a show in which he can star. If the teacher succeeds in controlling him in one situation, he will soon find something else, equally disturbing to the teacher, to assure himself an audience.

Such a child needs to be helped to understand why he acts as he does. In most cases, a child responds favorably and cooperates when we mirror his behavior to him without lowering his self-esteem. The teacher needs to provide ways in which he can win the admiration of the group. Why not, for instance, let him perform during an entertainment, and thereby give him an appreciative audience and the prestige he craves?

A word of caution in conclusion: The teacher needs to be observant enough to distinguish between the child who clowns for a moment of fun and one who persists in clowning because he cannot gain recognition in any other way.

Orval G. Johnson, *associate professor, psychology and guidance, Southern Illinois University (Edwardsville campus):*

The fact that Jim would put on his act even in the presence of the principal indicates the strength of his need for status with his peers. He was rewarded for his efforts by the teacher's obvious dismay and the laughter of his classmates. Then the teacher made things even more to his liking by asking a question which could be answered yes or no. When he answered defiantly, he kept attention focused on himself.

As soon as the teacher turned the tables and surprised Jim by offering him the attention of everyone in the room, he lost the advantage, and the zest was gone from the imitations. The respect of the class for the teacher increased when she did the unexpected.

In long-term dealings with youngsters like Jim, it is important to realize that they act as they do in an attempt to salvage self-respect. Such youngsters need intensive guidance in finding socially acceptable and more enduring ways of achieving status.

Roberta Morgan Moltmann, *dean of girls, Highland View Junior High School, Corvallis, Oregon:*

The boy who would dare to act up in the presence of the principal and the critic teacher and then go on to defy the student teacher must be spoiling for a power contest.

The situation would have been awkward for any teacher, regardless of experience. I believe that the student teacher erred, however, when she gave the boy a chance to defy her. Luckily, she did not become excited by his defiance, and her next step (asking the class to listen to Jim) turned the trick.

Too often, when an inexperienced teacher feels that his authority has been questioned, his tendency is to lash out hastily, and the result is a power struggle which the teacher almost always loses.

The wise teacher, dealing with a child striving for attention, will endeavor to create situations in which the child can receive recognition and attention for useful rather than useless behavior.

CLASSROOM INCIDENTS

THE GAS STATION VS. THE ESSAY

Eddie has refused to write an informal essay but produces one when he is told that he can't come to class next day unless he does. The essay: "On Being a Mean, Pig-Headed Teacher." Teacher accepts it calmly without commenting. Three consultants comment.

The Incident

Eddie, a sophomore, refused to write an informal essay, saying that he was going to work in his father's gas station when he graduated and wouldn't need to write stuff like that. Finally I told him that he couldn't come to class the next day unless he had written the essay. The next day, to my surprise and relief, Eddie arrived with his essay and laid it on my desk. Something defiant about his facial expression made me look down at the paper, and when I did, I saw that it was titled, "On Being a Mean, Pig-Headed Teacher."

The implication was all too obvious, even though I'm sure that in his calmer moments Eddie never would have used those adjectives to describe me. My first reaction was to tear up the paper and send Eddie to the principal's office. I quickly changed my mind, however. "He's done what you asked him to, and that's the important thing at the moment," I said to myself. I put the essay in my desk drawer without comment.

Consultants' Comments

Knute G. Larson, *principal, Mineola High School, Garden City Park, New York:*

The teacher in question has made two mistakes. The first is probably due to his familiar middle class prejudices, and the other to his anxiety to overcome them.

His first error was the usual assumption that most students can readily understand that it is important to learn how to read and to write well and that the agony of learning is balanced by the rewards of achievement. For too many youngsters, this is simply not true. They have little or no interest in the world of literature that the teachers seem to find so fascinating. Television and putrid drive-in movies satisfy whatever need they have for vicarious experience. Their monosyllabic grunts and illiterate notes are readily understood by their friends. Why struggle with the sadistic intricacies of the English language?

Why attempt to motivate these kids by appeals that are geared to middle-class values? What is needed is a blunt and direct statement of the fact that skill in speaking and writing pays dividends *in the pay envelope.*

Several years ago I asked a group of industrial leaders to assist us in planning an adult education program that would have real meaning and benefits to their employees. We schoolmasters were fully prepared with suggestions for courses in blueprint reading, mathematics, science, etc. The highest ranking industrialist present quickly brushed these aside.

"Teach them English," he stated. "They're old enough now to know that the one thing that keeps a man from being promoted is the lack of ability to express himself clearly in both speaking and writing."

There it is. Learning to write is worth cash, even to a gas station attendant. Why not tell Eddie about this, in language he can understand? Why not ask him to write his theme on the problems of a service station?

The second error was in appearing to tolerate insolence by failure to take direct action. Eddie's essay title contained calculated and unforgivable insolence directed at the teacher in words that might have been penned by H. L. Mencken. This should not have been overlooked.

Eddie delivered a written slap to the teacher's face and, in all likelihood, had informed his friends of it. I cannot judge, on the basis of the facts presented, what action was indicated. Perhaps a reprimand or being sent to the principal would have sufficed. In any event, Eddie should have been clearly informed that he was out of line. There is no reason to believe that, properly handled, this would have led Eddie to become a dropout. Silence in the face of injustice should never be acceptable to a teacher.

Eli M. Bower, *consultant, Mental Health in Education, Community Research and Services Branch, National Institute of Mental Health, Bethesda, Maryland:*

Eddie, having been offered a modified Bulgarian choice (as presented to Candide, it consisted of running the gauntlet thirty and six times through the whole regiment composed of 2,000 men or having his brains blown out with a dozen lead bullets), has decided to stay in the game and fight back. He has accepted the teacher's gambit and countered. The teacher cannot withdraw now. Despite the heat and hostility, the teacher did get what he was after—an essay was written.

Whatever else might be said about Eddie's opinions and style of communication (including the Lamb-like title) the fact remains that thoughts have been created, organized, and set down. Any teacher would be upset by Eddie's blatant expression of hostility, but with a fast double take he could demonstrate how a mean, pigheaded professional helps a child learn. Fortunately or unfortunately, Eddie seems to have enough trust in this teacher to call his bluff. Without this trust and the possibility of winning, Eddie might well have chosen another course of action.

Here's what I see happening. Out comes the paper and down sits Eddie with the teacher. The teacher treats Eddie's expressions of annoyance and bitterness as valid and understandable. Nevertheless, the teacher—with verve and sincere interest without satirical overtones—shows how he can help Eddie find ways of improving his ideas or organizing his words more pungently and succinctly.

In addition to learning sentence structure, spelling, and syntax and, perhaps, how to say what he wants to say clearly, imaginatively, and interestingly, Eddie might learn that hostility does not always elicit counterhostility. He might learn that there are times when even teachers can take unpleasant feelings on the part of students and that such feelings can, on occasion, be openly expressed.

In summary, I would suggest that the best way out of this difficulty for both teacher and student is to go through it, not around it.

Rolf E. Muuss, *professor of education, Goucher College, Towson, Maryland:*

Several factors in the incident need to be taken into consideration. First of all, Eddie's attitude indicates that he might be a potential dropout. Awareness of this potential should not result in the teacher's leaning over backward to please Eddie, but it does mean that the teacher ought to consider carefully what steps he takes. It was probably wise not to send Eddie to the principal's office. This might have brought about conformity—just as the teacher's threat not to accept Eddie in class the next day unless he had his assignment done brought conformity of a kind—but would hardly have helped to improve Eddie's attitude toward the teacher, the assignment, or the school.

Let us consider the assignment that brought about the initial refusal and, after some threat, the essay. The teacher had asked for an informal essay and since he says to himself when confronted with Eddie's paper, "He's done what you asked him to," we may assume that students could write on any topic. I would say that an assignment needs to be more specific than that, especially for a high school sophomore like Eddie. Even students in college find unstructured assignments frustrating. If the teacher had helped Eddie to choose a topic such as "High-Test versus Regular Gasoline," much trouble could have been avoided, and Eddie might have seen a relationship between the school assignment and work in a gas station.

I admire the teacher for neither getting outwardly angry nor developing a defeatist attitude. But are we to assume that placing the paper in the drawer ends the issue? Is the teacher contented with the paper and Eddie's attitude? I hope not.

What appears to be called for is a conference between the teacher and Eddie. In the interview, the teacher might try to break the ice by finding some good points in his essay, or he might look at the whole issue in a humorous vein, as did the instructor who, when he found his caricature on the blackboard, made the nose even bigger. Our teacher here might go along with his initial reasoning ("He's done what you asked him to") and let Eddie know that he accepts the assignment.

Where Eddie really needs help—long-range permanent aid—is in learning to see the purpose of essay writing, letter writing, and learning activities in general in relation to his life. In other words, he has to learn to accept the value of his education. To produce this change in attitude, the teacher might need help from other teachers and guidance personnel. The basic issue is, what can the teachers and the school do to help Eddie acquire a positive attitude toward school, the learning process, and education? If he can learn to accept that writing "stuff like this" has some value for him personally, he has learned an important lesson.

CLASSROOM INCIDENTS | THE RECALCITRANT INVALID

Boy with heart condition won't be quiet until the class "top sergeant" bellows at him. Teacher then permanently places the boys side by side. Three consultants comment.

The Incident

The boy had a reputation for recalcitrance when he entered my tenth-grade class. He had a heart condition that rather intimidated his teachers. Besides, his mother had threatened to deal with anybody who dared to lay a hand on him. I was young and eager to be a good teacher. That first day I called the class to order for roll call. Everybody stopped talking but Morris. My voice seemed no more to him than a fly buzzing in his ear. Again I said more firmly, looking at him, "Let's answer roll call, please." He didn't let up a moment but continued to address his neighbors.

A burly fellow sitting next to him elbowed Morris sharply in the ribs and bellowed, "Didn't you hear what the teacher said? SHUT UP!"

With that, Morris turned red, slid down in his chair, stuck out his lip, but hushed. Apparently, the disapproval of one of his peers was far more important to him than any rebuff I could give.

I did not utter a word of reproof to the top-sergeant classmate. In fact, I made sure that "my friend" sat beside Morris permanently, with the result that Morris remained docile as a lamb for the rest of the year.

Consultants' Comments

William G. Hollister, M.D., *chief, Community Research and Services Branch, National Institute of Mental Health, Bethesda, Maryland:*

This incident vividly portrays a teacher's normal anxious concern in response to having as a student a "recalcitrant boy" backed by a "threatening mother." Fortunately, she discovered the power of peer pressure in controlling adolescent behavior.

The episode raises two questions in my mind: How can peer pressures be constructively used? Is it desirable to end up with students docile as lambs? Skilled and experienced teachers have long used "behavior code setting" by students to lessen classroom behavior problems and to conserve time and energies for learning.

When given a chance, the class group often becomes interested in deciding what kinds of behavior will help all the class to have good, meaningful class experiences and what kinds of behavior will waste time and interfere with others.

Behavioral standards that are self-determined, discussed, and group-decided frequently lead class members to control each other's behavior for the good of the group. Used as a preventive measure, as a device for setting behavior standards ahead of time, these social code sanctions are experienced as general goals emerging from the group. However, mobilizing these pressures to handle a specific misbehavior, such as "What does the class think of Morris' talking during roll call?" may result in social rejection of Morris and a crushed, belligerent, or "I-don't-care" reaction from the boy.

Severely applied, group conformity pressures can squelch sparks of individuality and only defer or prolong the resentment and insecurity behind attention-getting behavior. Used wisely under adult supervision, behavior code setting done ahead of time can be used to set goals for constructive behavior and can become a positive social force for encouraging individual responsibility and social sensitivity.

William W. Wattenberg, *director, Delinquency Control Training Center, Wayne State University, Detroit:*

One of the important changes in attitude toward classroom discipline usually occurs at about the tenth grade, the level at which this incident occurred. In the junior high school years a boy or girl may earn status by resisting the teachers. Around the tenth grade, however, many young people wish to see a class get something done, and will take it upon themselves to enforce standards of classroom order. This is a healthy development.

For a new teacher, the important issue is to establish himself as a person who can help the class learn the subject matter of the course. If the teacher establishes an atmosphere of competence and success, then the combined group will support him in such instances as the one involving Morris.

During the particular incident under discussion, the teacher appears to have been hesitant. It is easy to understand her surprise at having Morris ignore her request. However, she would have done well to have exerted some leadership instead of leaving it up to the "top sergeant," for he might subsequently have taken advantage of his power in undesirable ways.

One way of exerting leadership would have been for the teacher to hold a friendly conference with the burly lad, thank him for what he had done, and then suggest that in the future she could manage well without his manhandling a student or shouting for order.

The teacher could also have a follow-up talk with the recalcitrant Morris to point out to him that his classmates had reached the age where they resent seeing anyone ask for or receive special privilege. The teacher could express her regret at his exposing himself to a rebuff from his peers and her hope that he would guide himself more knowingly in the future.

Elmon Ousley, *social studies teacher, Bellevue (Washington) Senior High School; winner of the 1963 National Teacher of the Year Award:*

I disagree very definitely with the way this situation was handled. The teacher seemed to have little understanding of the primary causes for Morris' rebellious attitude; her only treatment was for the symptom rather than for the problem. Her approach had such inherent weaknesses that I am surprised even greater problems did not arise. Certainly she did nothing to assist Morris.

Of course, assigning Morris to a young and inexperienced teacher constituted a serious administrative error, one grossly unfair to both the boy and the teacher. If the assignment was to be made, however, then the school counselor should have been called in ahead of time to advise the parent, the boy, and especially the teacher.

Even though this was not done, it is difficult to conceive of a classroom teacher who would not be sensitive to and aware of the limiting effect of a serious heart condition. Most teachers recognize that such a condition makes it impossible for a student to participate in normal rough-and-tumble activities and that he, therefore, must find some other avenue of release for his physical and emotional energy.

With his mother's encouragement, Morris defied authority because defiance was an easy and apparently safe way to expend part of his energy. He enjoyed this activity as long as he had the attention and the respect of the group.

Under the initial circumstances, I believe the teacher was correct in not reprimanding the "top sergeant," for his elbowing was probably the only way to reach Morris at the time. Her error lay in continuing to depend on the same method of control for the rest of the school year without ever giving Morris an opportunity to take his rightful place in the class.

Undoubtedly, most teachers endeavor to create an atmosphere in their classrooms in which a great deal of responsibility for a good learning situation falls upon the students. The best discipline is established by the cooperative efforts of the group, not by the dictatorial actions of the instructor.

I feel that during the year this teacher probably did not encourage her students to assume responsibility for the learning situation, nor did she build loyalties which would lend assistance in solving the problem if more than one student misbehaved. She stumbled onto a method of control only so far as Morris was concerned.

Because the teacher had no insight into the fundamental problem which Morris had to cope with, this emotional young wolf was forced to live as a lamb for the rest of the year. Under the circumstances, I doubt that he made any healthful adjustment to school or that he learned very much.

CLASSROOM INCIDENTS

WHY DID JOE CONFESS?

Joe feels betrayed when the principal punishes him for hitting John, because his (Joe's) confession was voluntary. He went to the principal at the suggestion of his teacher. Three consultants comment.

The Incident

When I entered my classroom one day, I noticed John holding a bloodstained handkerchief over one side of his face. I asked him what had happened, and he mumbled that he had slipped and hit his face on the desk. I could tell from the reaction of the class that this was a cover-up, so after sending the boy to the health office, I proceeded to investigate.

As I questioned the students, I could see several of them furtively glancing at Joe M., an uncooperative, school-hating sixteen-year-old. I thought it unlikely that Joe would ever confess his guilt, but while I was discussing the matter in general terms, he suddenly admitted that he had hit the other boy during a dispute.

After giving the rest of the class an assignment, I discussed the matter with Joe in a vacant corner of the room. I talked seriously with him about right and wrong and about how much better he would feel if he would go to the principal and admit the act himself. Much to my surprise and relief, he said he would if I went along with him.

On arriving at the office, I spoke to the principal alone for several minutes, explaining the situation and emphasizing that Joe, with some persuasion, had come on his own.

The principal agreed to be lenient because of Joe's voluntary confession; he did punish Joe for fighting, however, and told him he would have to pay any medical bills that might be incurred. I learned later that Joe felt betrayed and resentful, saying he had gotten the impression from me that if he admitted his responsibility he would get off scot-free. I wonder now whether I handled the situation wisely or whether some other approach might have taken better advantage of Joe's unusual gesture of cooperation and willingness to face up to wrongdoing.

Consultants' Comments

G. Gilbert Wrenn, *professor of counseling psychology, Arizona State University, Tempe:*

For Joe to confess so easily and publicly was certainly out of character. Alerted by his doing so, the teacher might well have indulged in some realistic ruminating:

"Why should Joe have confessed? I can be reasonably sure that it is not because he feels guilt and wants to get relief through confessing. He expects some benefit from confessing. Does he hope to distract attention from something else he has done? Was his act of aggression so open that he thinks the others will peach on him? What can he gain by confessing? Leniency?"

If the teacher had stopped to think about Joe's confession, he might have acted differently. In the first place, he would not have talked about right and wrong. Of course Joe had known that it was wrong to hit the other boy, so why belabor the obvious? All this did was to confirm the boy's belief that teachers always moralize.

Some pondering would have caused the teacher to see through Joe's reasons for agreeing to confess to the principal *if the teacher went along*. I am convinced that he was not afraid to go alone but thought that the principal would be easier on him with the teacher present. And the teacher went.

Reflecting on the motives behind the confession might have led to asking Joe, "Why did you confess to hurting John? You know, I might never have found out. . . ." The ensuing discussion might have led to the subject of punishment, and the teacher could then have proposed that Joe take his medicine. Instead, the teacher led Joe to believe that the principal would be easy on him (as the teacher would have been) and took personal credit because Joe had gone to the principal after some persuasion from him.

I do not mean to suggest that a teacher should not be helpful to a student. He should be trusting and believe in the student—*but within the student's world of meanings and values*. This teacher interpreted Joe's confession in terms of the teacher's world of values, which holds truthfulness and restitution high, and perhaps regards self-punishment as a virtue.

I strongly suspect that Joe's world may be a different one, a world of hostility, of getting by, of lying when it works, of hurting someone as you may have been hurt. In my opinion, if the principal had forgiven Joe, the lesson Joe would have learned would have been that a pretense of sincerity gets results.

Leland P. Bradford, *director, National Training Laboratories:*

The teacher was right to try to find out what had happened. That was his responsibility. I think, though, that he made a number of mistakes after Joe's admission that he had hit the other boy.

Joe was a school-hating kid who undoubtedly was hostile to authority and who probably conceived of authority only in terms of punishment. It would seem, then, that talking seriously to Joe about right and wrong (which must have seemed like preaching to Joe) and trying to convince him that he would feel better if he would tell his story to the principal was a devious way to help the boy think through his problem.

Apparently the teacher went to the principal without first getting all the information about the cause of the dispute. Thus, he made Joe vulnerable to punishment by the principal without trying to understand the boy's thinking and feeling about authority. It is not unnatural that Joe felt betrayed.

To add to the sense of betrayal, the teacher talked to the principal privately before Joe and the principal confronted each other. This must have seemed further evidence to Joe of the lack of trust the authorities had in him—confirmation of his ideas about the way in which authorities work.

Even if school rules made it mandatory to report the incident to the principal and the class knew this to be the case, I think that the teacher would have been wiser to ask the class to try to cope with the issue before he carried the matter to the higher authority.

If the teacher had expressed the belief that the situation could have been handled in the classroom by fair-minded students, had given Joe a chance to talk about his reasons and feelings, and had given the class the opportunity to see what they could do to help Joe solve his problems, Joe would have thought that—for this once, at least—authority was being fair. The class or the two boys involved might have worked out a plan to patch up the quarrel.

It seems to me that this teacher missed the opportunity to make a learning experience out of a difficult problem.

Elizabeth M. Drews, *professor of education, Michigan State University, East Lansing:*

The teacher's reporting the case to the principal seems quite justifiable. Obviously, injuries requiring medical attention must be reported, and the person responsible for them must be brought to the attention of the authorities. There seems to be no question either but that Joe should pay the medical expenses. This, in fact, is basic to the problem, for too many students are unwilling to accept responsibility for the results of their actions.

Regular classroom discussions centering on human relations and personal philosophies often can serve as a preventive measure for problems like Joe's as well as help classroom mental health in general. Punishment in and of itself is not an answer, and whatever punishment Joe received may have added to his feeling of antagonism.

All young people, particularly during that phase of adolescence when they are still groping for an identity, need and benefit from such discussions. Very practical topics can be presented. For example, the students can discuss property—their own and other peoples'. (If you borrow another boy's bat and break it, should you replace it?) In free discussions of this sort, previously silent and sometimes sullen students often talk freely about practical day-to-day events.

In the case of Joe, discussion sessions might help him gain self-esteem and a sense of confidence. Many young people, apparently including Joe, feel that they are outsiders and that no one cares. Meaningful participation in group conversation can change this. If a teacher and the group listen to Joe and accept him unconditionally, he will develop a sense of personal worth.

The discussions also might help Joe develop kindness and compassion and a sense of personal responsibility toward others. Certainly it will be difficult for him to grow to like others if he does not like himself. It will be equally difficult for him to be responsible to others if he has no sense of responsibility toward himself.

The teacher's awareness that Joe's problem must have been caused, at least in part, by faulty classroom procedures could bring about changes that would help all the students.

The task of the school is not merely to inculcate knowledge but also to develop appropriate attitudes for living in a democratic society. Too frequently, academic pressures crowd out the personal and social dimensions of education.

A BRIBE FOR JEB

By threatening to keep him out of an apprenticeship program a teacher gets Jeb to return a girl's shoes. The teacher then gives the boy a tongue-lashing within earshot of other students. Three consultants comment.

The Incident

On a rainy Friday at noon all fifty-four of the students in our high school were crowded into the classroom which served as the lunchroom. I was in charge, because the principal, who usually shared lunch duty with me, was away.

This was the end of my first month of teaching in a small community in Maine. I had the seniors—all twelve of them—for four subjects, and I also coached.

A recent incident in a nearby town had put both me and my students on the alert for trouble. A teacher had taken a beating in a fist fight with a student and had subsequently lost his job. Two or three of my boys reacted to the incident by creating minor disturbances in class, repeatedly but under cover.

Now, one of these boys had taken a girl's shoes, put them inside a desk, and was sitting defiantly on top, eating his sandwich. I shouted to him to get off, but he just sat, smiling insolently. Other pupils converged on the area waiting to see what would happen.

I walked over, looked directly at him, and spoke in a near whisper: "Too bad, Jeb. I was hoping we could get you through this year and into an apprenticeship program." I knew Jeb didn't like farming but loved anything mechanical.

This worked. Jeb stood up and sauntered away, trying hard to maintain some semblance of dignity.

Feeling that I had to teach him respect for authority, I took him into an adjoining room and gave him a verbal lashing.

Jeb's face turned deep red. Several times he tried to say something but whenever he did, I renewed my attack. Finally, he kept his head down, saying nothing. I think he suspected that other students could hear what I was saying because the door was ajar.

How he felt about the incident I never knew, because the incident was never discussed again. But for the rest of the year he was always polite in front of me, became one of my best athletes, and usually did as he was told.

Consultants' Comments

Rolf E. Muuss, *Department of Education and Child Development, Goucher College, Towson, Maryland:*

Two observations may help in understanding the interaction between Jeb and the teacher. First, considering the female shoe as potentially having symbolic significance might help in understanding Jeb's unwillingness to give up the ones he had taken.

Second, the teacher's extreme anxiety about his students' conduct, occasioned by his own inexperience and by the incident in the nearby town, tended to magnify whatever disturbance existed.

I believe that the teacher was unwise to have shouted his command to Jeb, for this placed the boy on the defensive. The combination of the sexual significance of the shoe, the social context in which the incident took place, and the shouted command by a new teacher contributed to the boy's defiance.

It is here that I would have acted differently and utilized a more psychological approach. I might have said, "If you can recover and conceal a football as effectively as you can hide those shoes, you will become a star quarterback, Jeb." A statement of this nature, sympathetic toward his prank but revealing an "I won't tolerate it" attitude would probably have ended the incident before it really became a power struggle.

When the shout didn't work, the teacher changed his voice to a whisper, but what he whispered was a threat, and he knew the boy well enough to make it a highly relevant one.

Using the threat was a first-aid approach to the problem. Through it, the teacher established his authority and accomplished his purpose. Something had to be done to return the girl's shoes and to restore the teacher's authority.

The follow-up is where I really think the teacher went astray. The verbal lashing, the door ajar, not letting Jeb speak up—all these were indications that the teacher sought revenge. Through such means he might have taught submission, but hardly respect.

I would have had a serious, private talk with Jeb, with no castigation, and I would have allowed Jeb to say whatever he had to say for himself. Perhaps I would have found out how he felt about the incident and even how he felt about the girl whose shoes he took.

Don't we need to understand the dynamics of our students' behavior to guide them to maturity and independence?

Ruth W. Hayre, *auxiliary district superintendent, School District of Philadelphia:*

The teacher's actions showed a wisdom far beyond his month of experience. First, he was aware that forces outside of school influence the behavior of pupils and he recognized the importance of the trouble in the nearby town.

Second, though a newcomer, the teacher had apparently learned about the abilities, hopes, and career plans of his students. Knowing that Jeb aspired to vocational school paid off and saved both teacher and pupil from what might have been an untenable situation.

The incident was not unusual—a senior boy decided to test whether the new teacher was a man or a mouse. Probably even pupils who would never get involved in a disciplinary situation themselves hoped that Jeb's defiance would culminate in a power struggle between teacher and pupil.

But the teacher surprised them all when he responded to Jeb with a look in the eye and a firmly whispered "hope." This surprise approach as well as the cogent reminder to Jeb of what continued misconduct might do to his plans resulted in immediate and quiet compliance.

The teacher could have left Jeb in the adjoining room to await discipline from the principal. However, by taking over the task himself, he established his own authority and his ability to cope with student discipline.

The effectiveness of the tongue-lashing can hardly be questioned. It was expedient to keep Jeb's mouth closed for the moment, as the teacher could ill afford an argument with him then. Later, Jeb would have ample opportunity for constructive self-expression in his relations with teachers and peers.

We hope the teacher's words, heard by the other students through the partly opened door, may have served as a warning to potential mischief-makers and provided needed guidance in behavior.

Jeb possessed the normal share of adolescent rebelliousness, but he was far from being the hard-core disciplinary case that often confronts a new teacher. He was not a hard-to-reach individual, but a boy with aspirations and a sense of right to which the teacher could successfully appeal.

Earl H. Hanson, *superintendent of schools, Rock Island, Illinois:*

The incident was a power struggle between Jeb and the teacher. The teacher won, but for a good American teacher, obedience gained only because the teacher is strong enough or wily enough to compel it is not enough. This teacher acted like an advocate of autocracy rather than of democracy.

The end he sought—getting control—was necessary if he was ever to be able to teach anything, but it did not justify such means as the bribery, the double-crossing, and the public humiliation of Jeb. The whispered remark was a bribe; Jeb was bought. The verbal lashing was a double cross. The door was probably left open to humiliate Jeb and nail down the teacher's victory (although whether the door was ajar by accident or on purpose is in question).

Children for years to come may suffer because of the way this power struggle ended. The teacher may have formed a permanent conviction that the only way to teach school is to find the natural student leader and beat him into submission.

Did this incident really occur in Maine, near the cradle of liberty? Democracy seems not to be respected around the town

described—only fists and sharp tongues.

described—only fists and sharp tongues.

What would I have done? Just about what the teacher did, I guess, to get Jeb off the desk. From then on, though, I'd have acted differently. I would have closed to door to protect Jeb's privacy. Instead of tongue-lashing him, I would have followed up on the vocational school hope, transmuting the bribe into guidance.

But I still wouldn't be finished. I would also have followed up on the incident by trying to develop Jeb into a leader useful in a democracy, neither a person submissive to an autocrat or himself an autocrat.

CLASSROOM INCIDENTS

THE EMBARRASSING ARTIST

The teacher finds an obscene note on her desk and pretends to have identified the culprit by the handwriting. He confesses after school. Three consultants comment.

The Incident

As if I didn't have enough problems in my first week of teaching, one morning an obscene note was left on my desk between class changes. It contained a picture of a nude man and woman, with my name and a fellow teacher's below it, plus an unusually crude remark. I was sure that it came from someone in a class of all boys who had just been in my room, but I had no notion as to which one it was.

I said nothing about the incident until the same class assembled again the next day. I felt that the solution must be mine, and as a young woman just out of college I was too embarrassed to tell anyone about it, anyway. It seemed to me that my whole career depended on the way I handled the incident.

As soon as the bell rang, I brought up the matter of the note and said that I had traced the handwriting to a member of the class. I went on to say that because I liked the boy and felt he was already sorry for what he had done, I had taken no action on the matter; in fact, if he came to me after school and apologized, I would not call his parents or have him expelled.

My bluff worked. That afternoon, the boy who had written the note came to me in tears and begged forgiveness. For the rest of the year he was the most respectful and helpful member of the whole class.

Consultants' Comments

Claire Bloomberg, *mental health consultant, the Washington (D. C.) School of Psychiatry:*

My first reaction on reading this incident was, "A likely story!" It is true that adolescents wrestle with emerging sex needs and sex fantasies. It is also true that they express some of these needs by drawing "dirty" pictures and having fantasies about teachers, particularly if the teacher is young and, consciously or unconsciously, has acted seductively. In my experience, however, a picture like this is usually circulated among the class members, not brazenly placed on the teacher's desk.

If the story is to be taken at face value, then I would think that the boy who put the picture on the desk was a deeply troubled youngster and very much in need of help.

I agree that this new teacher was certainly being challenged, that the pattern of her ability to control her class was going to be set, and that she couldn't just ignore the note but had to do something to try to discover the culprit.

Nevertheless, I think she got herself way out on a limb by lying to the class (never a good idea), and she was indeed lucky in this instance that the boy confessed. I believe it would have been better for boy and teacher alike if she had said something like this:

"I have found a note on my desk with a picture on it. I believe ceedingly upset and troubled. I am concerned about him and I hope that he will come to me after school so that we can discuss it and see if he needs to talk with the counselor about his feelings. I haven't spoken to anyone about the matter as yet, but if the boy wants me to make an appointment for him to see the counselor, I'll be glad to do so.

"Maybe the boy responsible will find it too difficult to come and speak to me. In any case, I want to let you all know right now that I will not tolerate notes like this in my class and that I will take steps to deal with any such notes in the future."

This method of approach has several advantages: It gives the boy an avenue to the help he obviously needs; it establishes the teacher as someone who faces up to difficult situations and expects respect from the class but who has sympathetic understanding of adolescent problems; finally, it does not put her in the position of having to cover up her own lie if no one confesses.

E. Paul Torrance, *professor of educational psychology, College of Education, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis:*

In this incident, the teacher emerged triumphant: A tearful boy confessed, begged forgiveness, and was thenceforth exceptionally respectful and helpful. This was achieved, however, at what may well be an extremely high price.

I can be sympathetic with the teacher. In order to survive, young and inexperienced teachers must maintain adequate control of the learning situation. Individuals have always used coercive strategies such as the one described here to control other individuals. These strategies, which are based on primitive techniques, successfully control others, but may do severe and irreparable damage to the growth and autonomous functioning of those being controlled.

Under stress, poorly trained or inexperienced teachers magnify threats and resort to coercive strategies because they do not have available better ones and because these strategies do give them control.

I suggest that primitive strategies be replaced by actions that maintain control and at the same time foster healthy, creative growth. The teacher in this classroom incident combined what I call the "strategy of making the student feel powerless" and the "strategy of omnipotence and omniscience." To replace the former, I propose what I have described elsewhere as the strategy of "experiencing joy [illegible] to replace the latter I suggest trying to be a guide, not a god. Admittedly, the application of these strategies requires greater skill, imagination, judgment, and personal security than do the coercive strategies.

This teacher should understand that the psychological basis of bluffing is a feeling of need to redress the balance between one's own real or fancied inadequacy and the other person's superiority. Bluffing not only cannot achieve this but it also sets the stage for dishonesty and lack of mutual trust.

This teacher might also try to understand the psychological meaning behind the behavior involved in the production of the note. The teacher may have been overly seductive, perhaps unconsciously, toward members of the class or in relationships with the fellow teacher within view of members of the class.

It is also possible that the boy may have been trying unconsciously to tell the teacher that her strategies of control made him feel powerless and stripped of his defenses. The student may have been trying to retaliate by drawing a picture of the teacher stripped of her clothes.

The teacher might also consider whether the boy's behavior is pathological, and if so, what special help he needs. The handling of the incident recognized neither a potential problem of mental health nor a potential talent. Through intelligent guidance, a teacher can transform gifted but socially undesirable behavior into valued kinds of creative achievement and growth, if the potentialities are recognized.

Mary Lane, *head of English Department, Waycross (Georgia) High School:*

I do not approve of the young teacher's having used a bluff to get the boy to admit that he had left the obscene drawing on her desk. Two wrongs do not make a right!

On the practical side, I cannot imagine that a boy in a grade above the fourth would be taken in by such a ruse. If no one had been fooled and if no confession had been forthcoming, the teacher, after only one week with her class, would have found herself in the untenable position of having been caught lying.

If I had been the teacher, I would not have mentioned the note to the class unless I had been able to identify the handwriting by matching it.

To bargain with the wrongdoer made a serious offense appear minor. Had the teacher determined who the culprit was by legitimate means, she could have referred him to a counselor for help. The fact that the boy was tearfully apologetic and docile in his contacts with her for the rest of the year does not mean that she had solved his problem. Did she check on his behavior elsewhere? She should have done so.

CLASSROOM INCIDENTS

CHRISTMAS SPIRIT

Caroline won't tattle on the two boys who are responsible for knocking over the Christmas tree, so the teacher assigns her to detention. When three boys then volunteer to take Caroline's place, the teacher says that because of their fine Christmas spirit, no one has to stay. Two consultants comment.

The Incident

When the intercom summoned me to the office, the boys and girls in my ninth-grade cooking class had almost finished decorating the small Christmas tree they were going to take to the children's ward at our community hospital. It was a beautiful tree and a novel one, too, for the trimmings were cookies the youngsters had baked and decorated—gingerbread boys, wreaths, stars, even a few bumpy-looking camels and reindeer.

Before I left the room, I told the class to continue their tree trimming and asked Caroline, who was ninth-grade class president, to consider herself in charge during my absence.

When I returned in five minutes, the tree was lying on its side on the floor. Cookie-ornaments, most of them broken, were spread far and wide.

Caroline explained that two boys had been scuffling over which one would get to attach his favorite cookie to the topmost branch, and in the course of the scuffle, the tree had been knocked off the table. I asked Caroline to name the boys, but she flatly refused, even after I reminded her that she had a dual responsibility—as my delegate and as a student officer.

Feeling that Caroline was defying me, I assigned her to detention.

At this, Wayne, seated in front of Caroline, raised his hand and asked if he could substitute for Caroline at detention. I thought that this must be Wayne's way of confessing, and so I was not surprised when a second boy made the same request. I didn't know what to think, though, when two other boys and a girl offered to "serve Caroline's sentence."

And then hands went up all over the room, and practically everyone volunteered. I was in a quandary over what to do. Were the youngsters trying to show me that I'd been unfair to Caroline, were they also being defiant, or were they just carried away with Christmas spirit? I decided to save face by appearing to believe that Christmas feelings were responsible. I said, "Such a display of brotherly love must be catching. No detention for anybody."

I don't know whether I did right or not, or whether I merely took the easy way out.

Consultants' Comments

Katherine R. Conafay, *executive director, Department of Home Economics, NEA:*

It seems to me that although the way the teacher expressed disappointment and disapproval was normal for a teacher or a parent reaction, it was not, theoretically, an ideal procedure. The teacher had delegated responsibility to Caroline and denying the girl the right to her decision that it would not be ethical for her to tell which youngsters were involved could have led only to resentment on her part and embarrassment for the young culprits.

What the teacher did later was absolutely right. What would have been gained by pursuing the matter further? Detention wouldn't mend the cookies or restore the tree. The students were simply reacting at their age level, and it would be an unwise teacher who failed to respond positively to the spontaneous reactions of a group of youngsters to such a minor incident. "To err is human, to forgive, divine," and to forgive is also a most effective way to promote a classroom climate for learning.

I'll bet dollars to doughnuts that the tree was redecorated, the children at the hospital were made happy, and the class became fully aware that thoughtless actions often end in a disaster.

Dorothy S. Towner, *classroom teacher, Department of Special Education, Syracuse (New York) Central Technical High School:*

It would be difficult for me to imagine any happening momentous enough to justify summoning a teacher from that most important spot on the educational scene, the classroom, unless a competent adult were available to take over for her. However, had some emergency of major proportions arisen and had I gone to the office and returned to find the conditions described in this incident, I would have acted quickly to restore in the classroom the spirit which had prompted the group to bake and decorate the cookies and to trim the tree for children in the hospital.

Probably I would have said something like, "Oh, I'm sorry there's been an accident. How can we fix up the tree again for those unfortunate youngsters who have to spend Christmas in the hospital? Nothing else you might send them would take its place."

When it appeared that the group was "back on the track" and objectivity prevailed again, I would have said, "We have enough materials to make another batch of cookies. If we work together after school, we can have the tree ready on time."

All too often our schools, with their choppiness and mechanization, are instilling spot knowledge and fixing the habit of responding to little things in little ways instead of creating a climate where it is natural to respond to the little things in great ways. Personalities can be nourished or blighted in the classroom. Individuals who learn in the school classroom to respond to difficult situations with greatness develop character adequate to face the stress and strain of life's more difficult classroom.

CLASSROOM INCIDENTS

A TEST FOR THE TEACHER

A teacher tells how he handled the situation when the master copy of an examination is taken from his desk. Three consultants comment.

The Incident

On discovering that the master copy of an examination had been taken from a folder on my desk while I was doing hall duty, I calmly explained the situation to the entire class and told them to write on a sheet of paper: (a) what they thought the teacher should do about it; (b) what they thought the guilty student should do; (c) the name of the guilty student, if they knew it. While they continued with their lesson, I quickly scanned the papers and discovered one name mentioned five times and no other name mentioned.

Quietly stopping at the student's desk, I asked him if he had taken the test from the folder. When he answered in the affirmative, I sternly said, "Give it to me." He took it from underneath his sweater and handed it to me.

I then told him to pack his books and stand outside the classroom door. Leaving the class, I asked him why he had stolen the test. He said he did not know why and that he had not shown it to anybody. I sent him to the principal's office where he explained the situation to the principal. At the end of the period, I stopped at the principal's office and told him my version, which was substantially the same as the boy's. The principal assigned him a week of detention periods as punishment.

The student was still friendly, but I was rather cool toward him for the remainder of the year.

Consultants' Comments

William E. Martin, *South Mountain High School, Phoenix, Arizona:*

The teacher involved in this classroom incident was most fortunate that the mystery of the stolen test was so readily solved.

The student who took the test might have done so unobserved, the students who informed might have had malice rather than truth as a motive or they might have named several suspects, the student accused might have denied taking the test and/or might have been innocent.

Class harmony and rapport between teacher and students can be easily destroyed by placing responsibility for a stolen test upon the class. Many students will resent the teacher who places them in the position of being informers. Also, accusing a student in the classroom embarrasses the entire class. Innocent or not, the student has been unnecessarily humiliated.

I believe that a better solution would be to administer the test as planned, but use it merely as a preliminary review to be graded and studied in class. The teacher should then prepare another examination. He should put it carefully away to prevent its loss and give it to his class at their next meeting. The grades of the second testing would be the only ones recorded.

D. Richard Albertson, *consultant on development of programs in education, National Training Laboratories, an NEA division:*

> The teacher is to be commended for involving his class in planning a course of action in this incident. He provided his students with an opportunity to learn how to handle a potentially emotional situation.
>
> Most of what they learned must have been negated, however, because the teacher evidently handled the situation as he saw fit after the guilty person was discovered. By using democratic methods to determine a course of action, he obligated himself to work out a solution in keeping with the students' suggestions. If we believe that consistent behavior is part of good teaching, the group involvement process used in the beginning of the incident should have been carried through to the conclusion.
>
> If I had been the teacher, I would have asked the suspected student to remain after class, confronted him with the evidence, and then attempted to work out a solution with him based on recommendations made by the members of the class. The next day I would have reported to the class what action had been taken. I would also have placed on file in the principal's office a report of the incident, the involvement of the class, and the solution reached.
>
> My relationship with the guilty student and the class would probably be better because we had decided together how best to solve this problem.

Elizabeth Mott, *teacher, Coral Gables (Florida) High School*:

The teacher was at fault in leaving a copy of the test on top of his desk. The master copy should have been put under lock and key, and other copies placed in a secure spot.

I would never have asked the students to "squeal" on each other. Sometimes practical jokers name innocent classmates just to get them in trouble.

If the teacher had already made these two mistakes, he would probably have been well-advised to have a personal conference with the guilty student. In my opinion, marching the boy to the office was not the proper approach.

Finally, a person who has erred should not be treated coolly for any length of time. This youngster needed guidance and he needed a friend.

"HEIL TO THE DICTATOR"

At the teacher's suggestion, the children elect a classmate to recite a poem of his choice on parents' night. But because the teacher doesn't like the child's choice, he arbitrarily picks another child only to find out later that the children now regard him as a dictator. Two consultants comment.

The Incident

For parents' open house, I decided to have one of the students in my tenth-grade English class recite a poem of his choice. For several weeks I had been combining a unit in poetry with one in speech, and I was delighted with the results. I thought that most of the youngsters were really coming to appreciate the music and beauty of poetry.

The class was enthusiastic about my plan. "Let's have an election to decide who'll give the reading," they begged. I agreed, feeling confident that Pamela would be their choice. Pamela loved good poetry, and she had a pleasing voice and good diction.

The class, however, elected Bert. He was a nice, intelligent boy, but he confirmed my belief that he had no feeling for poetry when he said that he would recite "Darius Green and His Flying Machine" on parents' night.

I was terribly upset. I felt sure that the parents, most of whom were college graduates, would conclude that both Bert and I regarded "Darius" as poetry. I was afraid that my status with those parents would be reduced to nil.

"Bert," I said, "the class selected you to represent it. In fairness to them, you should change your mind and choose one of the really fine pieces of English poetry."

"I think 'Darius Green and His Flying Machine' is the greatest," Bert replied. "Everyone laughs when they hear it."

"A poem isn't great because it makes people laugh," I explained patiently. "Bert, you *must* make a more suitable selection. Let's go through the anthology and pick something both you and I like that will make us all proud of you."

Bert looked stubborn. "I'm sorry, but I'd feel foolish reciting one of those romantic poems. You'd better pick Pam to represent the class."

"All right, Bert, I'll do just that," I said and a flutter of applause greeted my decision.

At open house, Pamela did a beautiful job of reciting several stanzas of "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner." As one mother said later on, "You could just see those water snakes, 'blue, glossy green, and velvet black.' "

I was satisfied with the way things turned out until I came into my classroom one morning a week later. On my desk was a copy of the school newspaper with a front-page picture of me welcoming parents to the open house. I was stunned to see that someone had inked a Hitler mustache on my face and printed "Heil to the dictator" under my picture.

I never mentioned the matter to my students, but I brooded about it for a long time afterwards. I don't think I'm harsh or unreasonable, yet I don't know to this day whether the way I handled the situation seemed dictatorial to most of the class or whether the student who defaced my picture was a lone malcontent.

Consultants' Comments

E. Paul Torrance, *Department of Educational Psychology, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis:*

If the teacher who described this incident could detach himself emotionally from the experience and read the description reflectively, he could answer his own question. His choice of words, inability to understand and predict student behavior, strong status orientation, unawareness of what students experience, and inconsistency between ideals and behavior—all this must have been seen by the class as "unreasonable and dictatorial." At least, these perceptions seemed clear enough to my class in personality development and mental health, when I asked them to imagine themselves into the students' minds.

In addition to being detached from the incident, my students had the advantage of taking a course in personality development and mental health. Teachers having such courses, according to one study, establish good relationships with students and have realistic and favorable attitudes towards them more frequently than those having no such courses.

If this teacher had had a course of this sort, I hope that he would have used creative problem-solving processes so effectively and consistently that such predicaments would not have occurred. He would have developed with his students criteria for evaluating poetry and the reading of poetry. When the problem of parents' open house arose, the class would have been encouraged to analyze the problem, then produce alternative solutions and evaluate them, before rushing to decisions.

Once the predicament had arisen, I hope any teacher who had had my course would have either made constructive, imaginative use of the students' decisions or been honest with them.

I wonder what would have happened if this teacher had been honest. He could have told the class that he was upset because most of their parents were college graduates, would not regard "Darius Green and His Flying Machine" as good poetry, and would consider him an ignoramus. Then, the class could either have "straightened him out" about their parents' values in poetry or would have indulged him, recognizing that their parents' judgment might be adverse.

When students believe that a teacher is honest and "on their side," they are usually quite indulgent of his mistakes and needs. After such incidents as this, however, students find it difficult to believe that the teacher is "on their side."

Margaret M. Casey, *English teacher, Bethesda-Chevy Chase High School, Bethesda, Maryland*:

There are times when the will of a teacher must prevail. But when a teacher permits a class to make a decision, he ought, in all fairness, to accept the decision and, upon occasion, learn from the experience. In this classroom incident, the teacher regrettably put himself into the position of letting students see that he was just paying lip service to the democratic process. He might have avoided all unpleasantness by establishing with the class standards for selection of a poem before permitting the class to elect a person to read the poem. To be arbitrary is preferable to being unfair.

A teacher knows that emotional development frequently lags behind intellectual development. As a result, even when students respond favorably to poems selected by a teacher, they invariably drop down a notch or two on the literary yardstick when they are free to select a favorite poem. A teacher must learn to respect the level on which a student can honestly respond to poetry and must refrain from intimating that the student's taste is inferior. If a student is made to feel that he lacks judgment, he will, in all probability, transfer his resentment of teacher to resentment of poetry. A teacher's prime concern should be to help students grow up to poetry, not to impress a community.

In this instance, the teacher seemed to lack the self-confidence necessary for making mature decisions. Had he accepted the will of the class and allowed Bert to read the poem of his choice, he might very easily have announced, or have had a student announce, that the class had elected Bert to read a poem and that Bert had selected "Darius Green and His Flying Machine" because he thought the parents would find it amusing. And very likely the parents would have left the school more lighthearted than when they arrived.

If, however, the teacher had sound reason to suppose that a few parents might be critical, he could have suggested that the class elect a second student to read a serious poem. Under no circumstances should the teacher have embarrassed Bert in front of the class or given a minority group in the class an opportunity to approve the teacher's decision to appoint someone in Bert's place. Killing interest in literature is a high price to pay for teacher pride.

CLASSROOM INCIDENTS

TARDY TROUBLE

When the teacher asks Tom why he was five minutes late, Tom asks, "How long does it take you to go?" The class laughs, and the woman teacher blushes and continues with the lesson. Five consultants comment.

The Incident

Tom came into my eighth-grade English class five minutes late, slamming the door behind him. Frankly I was disappointed to see him, for the class always ran more smoothly when this smart-alecky 14-year-old wasn't there.

He made his way to his seat.

"Why are you late?" I asked.

"I went to the boys' room."

"Don't you know you're supposed to have a pass?"

"Yeah, I got one from Mr. Smith, last period."

"Well then, you shouldn't have walked into my class five minutes late."

"How long does it take *you* to go?"

The class roared. I could feel the hot blush rise from my neck to my face. I knew that I shouldn't let Tom get away with this crudity. The way the class had responded to his insulting insolence would probably encourage him to go even further next time. I simply didn't know how to cope with the situation right then. What if something I would say prompted him to say something even worse? In that case, I knew I would be lost as far as ever getting any place with that particular class was concerned.

I turned to the board and went on explaining the use of quotation marks.

Luckily for me, Tom was expelled from school that same day for some earlier and more serious misbehavior, so I didn't have to deal with him again. I always felt, though, that the class respected me less because Tom so obviously had held the upper hand. Is there a right way for a woman teacher to deal with a situation like this?

Consultants' Comments

Bea Bates, *teacher, Flowing Wells Junior and Senior High Schools, Tucson, Arizona:*

Students are human beings who react like human beings. The teacher could have recognized the probability that Tom's slamming the door as he entered the classroom was a reaction to an incident in a previous class and have ignored the temporary disturbance.

If a school policy required that a teacher report an unexcused tardiness that period, no doubt there was an established routine for checking on whether or not a student had an acceptable excuse. Since Tom did not hand his pass to the teacher or place it on her desk, she could calmly have asked him for it. Instead, she was explicit in her assumption that he did not have one. If she had asked to see the pass or had believed him when he stated he had obtained one, she could have continued the class without aggravating him by her complaining reprimand.

The students' reaction to Tom's reply displayed a sense of humor that the teacher would have been wise to emulate. Since, by her admission, she had prompted him to say what he did, she could have laughed with the class, have made a comment, and then have gone back to her explanation of quotation marks.

Not having to deal with Tom again because he was expelled from school that same day was only a temporary reprieve for this teacher. She will meet other students—young human beings who vary as much in temperament, motivation, previous experience, and style of learning as they do in shape, size, energy level, and rate of development.

Teachers, as well as students, are human beings. The difference between them lies mainly in the assumption that teachers are the adults. In this incident, the teacher's embarrassed inability to "cope with the situation right then" appears to have been the result of her failure to act in an adult manner rather than the fact that she was a woman teacher.

Fern Adams, Tom Butterworth, *and* **Ruth Cohen,** *consultants in psychological and pupil personnel services on the staff of the Los Angeles County superintendent of schools, and* **Harry Smallenburg,** *director, Los Angeles County Division of Research and Pupil Personnel Services:*

We tend to look at any classroom incident from the dual framework suggested by Fritz Redl—maintaining surface control and building long-range attitudes. Although both are essential, teachers often overlook the latter while dealing with the former.

In this incident, the surface control aspect involves this teacher's inability to induce Tom to cooperate. Obviously she had been pulled into what appears to be a rather intensive power contest with Tom. What she didn't realize earlier was his ability to defeat her efforts at control if she played his power game. In this sense, her questioning of his reasons for being tardy in front of the class had an unfortunate result that was predictable. However, she probably fretted unnecessarily about her loss of leadership with the class.

Several of the following suggestions or guidelines might have helped the teacher build positive long-range attitudes:

1. Review Tom's cumulative record folder to determine his abilities, achievement, interests, and health with particular attention to why he is older than most of his classmates. Check over comments by other teachers and look for any clues about parental attitudes toward school.
2. Find out firsthand what the school counselor or the school psychologist or the principal or a former teacher has to say about Tom's interests, experience, and needs.
3. Assess personal attitudes toward Tom by considering "Why did I say I was 'disappointed to see him' and 'the class always ran more smoothly when this smart-alecky 14-year-old wasn't there'?"
4. Attempt to establish some positive, friendly contact with Tom —perhaps with something as casual as a conversation in the hall, or better, a conference after class or school.
5. Arrange an informal (or formal) conference with other teachers, the school counselor, the school administrator, the nurse.
6. Talk with his parents at back-to-school night or at a monthly PTA meeting, if they attend, or telephone and visit them in their home if appropriate.
7. Arrange a three-way conference with parent, teacher, and counselor.
8. If these efforts to establish a constructive relationship do not work, avoid a confrontation of the type described. Instead, take him aside or ask that he remain for a few minutes after class. In talking to him, don't use "Why" or "Don't you know?" types of questions; they make us all defensive.
9. Impose quietly and impersonally whatever consequences are consistent with previously established classroom procedures.
10. When confronted with a situation of this type, use humor to reduce the tension if an appropriate light comment comes to mind, but don't strain for one.

If all efforts fail, don't feel that you have failed or that the class respects you less. Chalk it up to experience and be ready for another Tom another day.

NEW AND FRESH

Teacher learns that Paul has called her an old bag. She makes him repeat the remark to her face and then in front of the principal. Two consultants comment.

The Incident

For many years I have taught in a small junior-senior high school in a poor but very old, settled, and stable community where the parents are unusually strict and instill in their children great respect for teachers. Behavior problems are rare.

Last year our school enrolled children from a new community nearby until its high school was completed and staffed. This new community is made up of middle class families, many of whom are extremely permissive with their children.

Paul, a slight boy from a particularly permissive home, was placed in my seventh-grade homeroom, and I was constantly having to speak sharply to him.

One day, after I had just done so, he leaned forward and whispered something to Jean Anne, who sat in front of him. Jean Anne swung back to face me and said loudly, "Paul said, 'Teacher is an old bag.' " The students waited breathlessly to see what I would do.

It would be a shame, I felt, if the disrespectful ways of Paul and a good many others from his community were to spread to our well-behaved student body.

I called Paul to my desk and asked him to repeat his remark to my face. Somewhat to my surprise, he did. This didn't seem to be enough, so I sent Jean Anne to get the principal.

He arrived and stood just inside the door, which is at the back of the room. I told him there was something I wanted him to hear. Then I ordered Paul to face the principal and repeat what he had said about me. After Paul, now crimson, turned around and repeated his remark once more, I allowed him to return to his seat.

The principal asked me in an undertone what I wanted him to do further, and I replied that from my point of view, the incident was closed. My pupils seemed to feel differently, however. For several days after that, I noticed that during the lunch hour, five or six of the bigger boys from my homeroom formed a ring around Paul and shoved him roughly from one to the other, chanting, "Teacher is an old bag."

This and my handling of the situation in the classroom seemed to teach Paul a lesson. At least he was never rude again in my presence. In retrospect, I wonder, though, what would have happened had I handled the situation differently.

Consultants' Comments

Virginia H. Ormsby, *George Washington Carver Elementary School, Coconut Grove, Florida:*

Whether or not we like it, contemporary life is changing, and, as teachers, we're going to have to understand these changes and help our students to do so. This does not mean a relinquishing of our good values. It means acceptance of change and an effort to find new ways of dealing effectively with it.

In studying this Classroom Incident, I feel that the teacher missed an opportunity to help not only Paul, but Jean Anne as well. The girl's behavior, in my opinion, was just as bad and much more disruptive than Paul's, even though he was a chronic problem.

I think, had I been the teacher, I would have recognized that Jean Anne's attitude was somewhat smug and a little vituperative. I think I would have said to her, "Jean Anne, it's not very thoughtful to repeat an unpleasant remark made about someone else. Let's forget it, shall we?" Then I'd have continued with the lesson.

Perhaps the teacher could have asked Jean Anne and Paul to remain a few minutes after class or come back after school to discuss the incident. A frank discussion might have enlightened Jean Anne as to the importance of respecting other people's sensibilities. A talk with Paul, who obviously *could* have been reached (judging by his embarrassed reaction to public censure), might have revealed a truth to him: that, regardless of our private feelings about others, it is unkind to voice them publicly. I wonder, too, if the teacher might not have recognized a lack of acceptance in herself of this new breed of child who was muddying up the waters of her still pond. Acceptance of Paul by the teacher, and inevitably by the class, could have benefited them all—especially Paul.

Edith Lawton, *director of guidance, Darien (Connecticut) High School:*

At the moment of conflict, neither the teacher nor Paul could be expected to see this situation with the objectivity I can have in reacting to it from afar. However, this kind of objectivity should have come into play before the teacher found herself "*constantly* having to speak sharply to him."

Paul is a stranger not only because he comes from another community but also—and more especially—because he comes from a different background. Today's socioeconomic structure implies that "middle class" is better than "poor," that permissiveness is more up-to-date than strict upbringing and great respect for adults. Paul has to learn—at the difficult age level of a seventh grader and perhaps for the first time—to see himself as one of the "out" group who needs to learn how to move "in." Add to this the fact of his slight stature, and he has little going for him.

Paul is certainly threatened by the addition of this new situation to all his other early-adolescent problems; the teacher is quite likely disturbed by the threat to her long-established reign. The emotional tension is heightened by the conflict these feelings engender in this particular teacher and pupil. The active conflict seems to have been in the making for some time.

Naturally, a teacher must speak firmly in controlling a class or applying discipline. But the contributing factors in the misbehavior of any individual student can best be understood and dealt with outside the classroom in a one-to-one relationship, in which the teacher can be a concerned person rather than an authority figure.

In this incident, the teacher should have gone out of the room with Paul, rather than trying to handle the situation there. And why summon the principal? What could he add but the presence of one more authority figure? What could Paul do except stand his ground, embarrassing as the situation had now become? On the other hand, the teacher and/or the principal alone with Paul could have helped him see how to establish himself in a new situation by positive rather than negative behavior.

CLASSROOM INCIDENTS | OUTER SPACE VS. ANATOMY

Teacher refuses to continue showing film on outer space until the owner of a comic book in which anatomical details have been added to the males and females confesses. Two consultants comment.

The Incident

My ninth-grade class was engrossed in a film on travel in outer space. Right in the middle of the picture, the antiquated projector broke down. This often happened, and I knew I could get it going again in a few minutes. I told the class to work ahead on the next assignment, and I set about demonstrating my mechanical ability.

The students didn't settle down to work as quickly as I'd have liked. I heard a lot of laughing and talking. When someone at the back table guffawed, I straightened up from the projector to glare in the direction of the noise and was just in time to see Dan, one of the four boys at the table, pass a comic book to Joe, who was across the table from him.

"I'll take the book, Joe," I said.

Joe turned flaming red. "It's not my book; it's his," he said, pointing to Pete, who was sitting next to him.

"Just give it to me," I said.

Small wonder that Joe was red-faced. The figures in the cover picture, a young man and a girl, had been embellished with complete anatomical details.

"Who is responsible for this obscenity?" I asked. "Joe says the book is yours, Pete. Are you the artist?"

"It's my book, but one of the other guys did the drawing, honest."

"You, Dan? You, Tyler?"

Nobody answered. Was Pete telling the truth?

"My opinion of anyone who draws nasty pictures is pretty low," I said, "but to do such a thing and not be man enough to admit it is even worse. I'm sure that one of you boys is the guilty person, so if one of you doesn't speak up, all four of you will have to take your books out in the hall and continue to work on tomorrow's assignment while the rest of the class sees the end of the movie."

Still no response. The four boys filed out of the room. Just as I was about to start the projector to show the end of the movie, however, Dan came back into the room.

"I'm the one," he said. "Shall I tell the other fellows they can come in?"

"All right," I said. "They can come in, but you will have to stay in the hall. I'll talk to you after class."

Dan apologized after class and I said, "We'll forget it if it doesn't happen again," but I didn't have a good feeling about the way I'd handled the situation.

Consultants' Comments

Paul G. Plantico, *chairman, Social Studies Department, West High School, Green Bay, Wisconsin:*

One thing we have learned about human behavior is that it is meaningful to the person carrying it out. It represents his struggle to satisfy basic needs. Students crave social satisfaction. If they fail to get it in normal ways, they will attain it in devious and indirect ways. With this in mind, we must analyze our own behavior as well as that of our students.

Dan got the attention he was after by circulating the altered picture. The teacher used poor judgment in confronting the four boys before the entire class. This only placed the boys in the spotlight of attention. No doubt the teacher felt his authority challenged and hoped to reestablish it by making the offender confess.

All four boys should not have been punished because of one person's misconduct. If the movie was of educational value, it should not have been used as a reward nor the assignment as punishment.

I think Dan's confession was another bid for attention. It is doubtful that the other three boys could have pressured him into a confession, although acceptance by peers certainly counts.

The teacher was wrong to have Dan return to the hall after his confession. He should have let Dan see the film with the rest of the class.

The teacher could have avoided most of this incident. Dan's antisocial behavior in the classroom is largely explainable as a desire for recognition. His rather dramatic confession is additional evidence of this need. The teacher who understands students would have had Dan taking roll or setting up and operating the projector in the first place. If students don't get recognition for normal, socially acceptable behavior, they turn to antisocial behavior.

Ruby Padgette Herlong, *eleventh- and twelfth-grade English teacher, Saluda (South Carolina) High School:*

Though the teacher in the incident seems to have achieved some success, he has done so in a costly way, for he has followed three procedures which lower him in the students' eyes: (a) He made a scene in the classroom over an incident that should have been handled quietly. (b) He punished four students to reach one offender. (c) He indicated to the class that the film was not an integral part of his instruction but a frill to be removed at will.

Certainly the teacher could not ignore the circulation of pornography. But he had the advantage of being almost certain that one of four boys was responsible. He should have quietly told those boys to see him after class and then continued with his class instruction—showing the film to enhance a unit the class was studying.

In the ensuing conference, he would have had the opportunity to talk to the boys as a group and as individuals. In this setting, the offender would have lost his concern about the esteem of his peers and might have admitted his guilt. Then the teacher could have reasoned with him about the poor taste and lack of respect that he had shown.

The teacher's initial error, I believe, was in his philosophy of teaching. He evidently felt that the film was unnecessary and should be handled as a kind of reward for good behavior.

When the teacher sent Dan out of the room again while everyone else saw the end of the picture, he missed a good opportunity: This would have been the ideal time to bring Dan back into the classroom and continue the class work, since at this point the teacher was in complete control of the situation.

CLASSROOM INCIDENTS

A BULLY WITH BOOTS

On an errand for the principal, Roy goes onto the gym floor wearing heavy boots. When the coach roars at him, Roy deliberately scratches the floor. The coach and Roy end up in the principal's office, but the latter does not back up the coach. Two consultants comment.

The Incident

Roy is a 16-year-old ninth grader. He hates school and everything connected with it, and he shows his feelings by being insolent to the teachers and bullying the other kids. He is hot-tempered; once, in an outburst, for example, he threw a heavy cigarette lighter through a classroom window.

Our school has a new gym with the kind of floor that is a coach's dream. As coach, I strictly enforce the regulation that no one go on the floor in street shoes. One day I came out of the shower room to discover Roy standing in the middle of the gym watching some boys throw baskets. He was wearing heavy boots.

"Roy, get off the floor," I guess I roared.

Roy started toward the door. He dragged his feet so that the boots made deep scratches on the polished wood. I grabbed him by the arm and shoulder, and shoved him to the side of the room.

Roy swore at me and said, "If you don't get off my back, I'll kill you."

I usually deal with my own discipline problems, but feeling that Roy's defiance and his threat warranted stronger measures than were within my authority, I told Roy to go to the principal.

I changed to street clothes and went to the office. Roy was there before me.

"Ah, Mr. H," the principal said, "I was just going to ask you to come. There seems to have been a misunderstanding. I realize that Roy should not have been on the gym floor in his boots, but he was on an errand for me. I had to get a message to Bill Thomas, who is in the gym this period."

"Roy isn't in trouble with me because of wearing boots," I explained. I went on to tell about the bad language and the threat.

"I'm sure that Roy realizes that he shouldn't have lost his temper," the principal said, "just as I'm sure that you're sorry you lost your temper and manhandled him. Since Roy thinks he was being punished unjustly, perhaps we'd better just forget the whole affair."

Roy sat and leered at me. I said nothing (what could I say?) and walked out of the office.

I believe that the school would be a whole lot better if the principal would back up his faculty and quit siding with Roy and the other troublemakers. But he is not the type of man to accept criticism or suggestion—not from me anyway. Still, I boil every time I think of this incident.

Consultants' Comments

Gerald M. Van Pool, *director of student activities, National Association of Secondary School Principals, an NEA department:*

Here is a situation in which everyone is wrong—student, coach, and principal. Roy is wrong for not controlling his temper, for damaging the gym floor, and for threatening the coach. The coach is wrong for roaring at Roy (and we may be sure that he *did* roar in spite of his statement, "I guess I roared"), for losing his temper, and for laying hands on the boy. The principal is wrong for listening only to the boy and then making a snap judgment, for saying that there has been a misunderstanding when there was nothing of the sort, for not listening to both sides, and for disciplining the coach in front of a student. ("I'm sure that you're sorry you lost your temper and manhandled him.") The whole business is not a comedy of errors—it is a tragedy of errors.

It is easy enough to sit quietly in an office and pontificate on the rights and wrongs of the incident; it is not easy to say what ought to have been done. However, it seems to me that if Roy is really the hardened case this incident makes him out to be, he should have been receiving some pretty high-powered care from psychiatrists and social caseworkers.

One wonders why this boy, of all the boys in school, was sent into the gym on an errand for the principal. What was he doing in the office anyway? Perhaps this was part of the school's psychiatric treatment to recognize the boy, to make him feel wanted. On the other hand, the principal should have known coaches regard desecration of the gym floor as only slightly less serious than mayhem.

Why was *this* particular boy sent? And especially when wearing those heavy boots!

Knowing the boy's temper, the coach should never have laid hands on him even though he felt that such action was justified in view of the circumstances. It is quite possible that Roy would have moved off the floor at a request from the coach, though perhaps not so fast as the coach would have liked. The antisocial may obey an order, but seldom give the impression that they are doing it willingly; in fact, the exact opposite seems to be the rule. Their unspoken motto often is "Be sullen. Be surly. Don't cooperate. Do what you are told, but make a scene first."

A coach, who works with boys all day long, should have known this and should not have expected hearty cooperation from Roy. The boy was wrong, dead wrong, in being on the floor wearing heavy boots, in deliberately scratching the floor, and in making those vicious remarks. But an experienced youth worker, such as a coach, should know what to expect and act accordingly. Instead, the coach lost his cool.

No one, and certainly not a principal, should ever make a decision on or render judgment between two people without first hearing both sides. The coach had a right to expect more from his principal than to be told, simply, "There seems to have been a misunderstanding," especially when this was not the case. Everything was perfectly clear to the coach and to Roy; if anyone was confused, it was the principal. It would not have taken the coach very long to change his clothes and come to the office. Surely the principal could have delayed talking with Roy long enough for the coach to arrive and give his version of what happened.

Finally, if the coach is to be reprimanded, it should be done in private and certainly not in front of a student. A tragedy of errors, indeed.

E. Wade Underwood, *president, Akron (Ohio) Education Association; mathematics teacher, Garfield Senior High School, Akron:*

Roy is the type of student who requires a great deal of effort on everyone's part if he is to be kept in school. And keeping him in school should be everyone's objective as long as his presence does not adversely affect the discipline and, thereby, the learning situation within the building.

However, Roy's outbursts of temper, his flagrant insubordination, and his habit of bullying other students create discipline problems that are not, or should not be, the classroom teacher's regular duty to handle. Therefore, we can assume that Roy was a regular visitor to the principal's office.

It is regrettable, though understandable, that the principal would assign (either occasionally or regularly) the prestige position of courier to this student who was constantly in his office for disciplinary reasons—even though his presence at the time may have made him a handy errand boy.

By having Roy do work that should be reserved for honor students, the principal became a contributor in the case. Because of his involvement, he seemed unable either to define the problem or deal with it adequately.

He and the coach should have held a private conference to investigate the possibility of handling the situation in a manner agreeable to both. If, as we may assume, their primary objective was to serve the best interests of both Roy and the student body, they would probably have reached a satisfactory way to handle the incident. We may be certain the solution would not have been one that left Roy *sitting and leering* at anyone and that might have an adverse effect on the discipline within the building.

An incident of this sort is perhaps unavoidable at times. However, if the incident is part of a pattern for either the coach or the principal, we would question the disciplinary procedures of the coach and the ability of the principal to function as the chief disciplinary agent for the building.